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Holiday Greetings and Good Wishes



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Left to Right: Paul A. Loh, D., DMD
Heidi A. Pollock, DDS
Matthew R. Kolesar, DMD, MScD
Julien Shuman, DMD

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THE LAST SEVEN DAYS

COMPILATION OF LATEST NEWS & PHOTOGRAPHY

YEAR IN REVIEW
JANUARY 12 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2014

The Year of Irene

In the days before Tropical Storm Irene hit, some Vermonters cautioned down the highway, while others wondered if they should even be worried. The storm didn't look that bad. It was being nixed from hurricane status before it even got here.

And when you were living next to a river, at first, Irene seemed underwhelming. It dumped some rain and took down a few branches, but most people in the devastation area didn't even lose power.

For those the first indication that something was wrong came on Sunday night, when reports and urgent staff updates on local radio began started appearing from friends and media outlets in the southern and central parts of the state. By the next morning, it was clear that much of Vermont was in the midst of a full-scale disaster.

Reporters spent the rest of the year reporting the damage caused by the storm and exploring with its consequences. Seven Days has covered that process intensively in print and online over the past few months. We've updated some of those stories in this week's Local Matters news section, starting on page 14. And in last week's episode of her audio video series "Stuck in Vermont," Eva Solberg interviewed the storm survivors (some she covered in Irene) amidst a aftermath. See the footage at sevendaysvt.com.

We should see full-blown Irene-related stories — i.e., what the heck will happen with the Waterbury office complex? — for years to come.



facing facts



NEAR HOME

The biggest incident related to the location of our photography did not even make it to our desk as the flood at MIT Silverling the fire.



OUTSIDE TIME

We have covered the weather of our readers' lives. This year alone, we have been working for us, reporting on our own lives. And those you just live as we live.



PROJECT RESULTS

Church Street and Wal Street. That was the story of Vermont's business world. The "Curry" opportunity to go to the City Hall Park. A website launched the message of the day.



ADVICE RESULTS

Unsettled students may be forced to move other states. With an available employment, released each risk. Candidates will be required to pay.

THESE ARE THE RESULTS OF OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

That's How Often!
Tropical Storm Irene's place as the last of top Google searches of 2011 among Americans, according to Google (Robert III said, "Friday" hits, who like 1.)

#3

TOP FIVE

MOST POPULAR ITEMS

1. **Five Years** "On the Job" by Lily Tetsun (March 3). The Chicago Report listed in this column, Lily Tetsun (March 3) would be an undoubted location, which tells us even staff members of this website.
2. **Five Years** "Organized Lincolns" by Lily Tetsun (May 24). The website listed in this column, Lily Tetsun's first report of the "Organized Lincolns" was a week ago, with another CHM article at The Chicago Report (March 3). Lily Tetsun's first report of the "Organized Lincolns" was a week ago, with another CHM article at The Chicago Report (March 3).
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5. **Five Years** "On the Job" by Lily Tetsun (March 3). The Chicago Report listed in this column, Lily Tetsun (March 3) would be an undoubted location, which tells us even staff members of this website.

tweet of the year:

Response

and you. Thanks to you for sending the word about #Vermonters. Every bit of good and hope. (2/1)

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eds on the internet and poring through hundreds of responses from people who are clueless.

Now our choices are to enhance the animal (dealing with remains is problematic), give the animal to a clueless person or not being able to afford to feed everyone, our families included. Please give us some suggestions, not just righteous anger.

Amanda Gilford
CLINTON

TWO LITTLE PIGGIES

[Re "York, Please," December 14] For the record, we have had a "Pig Mac" on our lunch menu at Crop Circle & Bar in Cleveland for the past three years, and it is far not-losing sandwiches: grilled pork loin, braised shoulder, cub-anoid bacon, special sauce, cheddar, and you know the rest. It will also be featured at the new Crop Circle & Brewery in Swanton soon. Let's see how long it takes for the Golden Archer's comment to give notice!

Steve Schomer
CLINTON

"NOCO" NAYSAYER

I returned to the "North Country" from New York City two years ago, so you probably know where I am coming from. I did my junior high school in the late '60s and only '70s in Plattsburgh. It has not changed. I have no go to City Market and Healthy Living to buy my organics. Pretty sad, since many of our neighbors from Canada who come shop here would help support the store type of store. Don Bolles, who wrote "Things to Do in Plattsburgh When You're Drunk" July 27) showed up in a recent article.

Marc Gordon
PLATTSBURGH, NY

QUEEN CITY SNOBS

Seriously? The lands suggested by the narrow-mindedness of this article ["Things to Do in Plattsburgh When You're Drunk," July 27] I would have thought people from across the pond were more open minded, if a little bit to

the left of the foul pole in February. I grew up spending summers in the Northeast Kingdom. I can tell you that people there in no way reflect the snobbishness of Burlington—in fact, they are much more pleasant to be around than anyone I've ever known in the Queen City. I also think it's a good time to point out that for a number of years the print edition of this paper was printed in Plattsburgh.

Steven Jones
PLATTSBURGH, NY

Publisher's note: True enough. The Plattsburgh Press Republican only printed Seven Days for many years.

DIGITIZING HISTORY

I was interested to read in last week's Seven Days about the Fleming's project to digitize his collection and to share it and present with it in a variety of new ways on the web ["Digitizing a Treasury of Objects in the Fleming," December 14]. It may not be long before I can seriously interact with the Fleming collection and thereby achieve some of my impossible, early exposure to the arts.

The Fleming's digitization project interested me in another way, too. I have begun to interact with several small-town historical societies in Vermont that proudly, diligently and spiritedly hold and maintain available pieces of their local and state history. As a community director for e-Vermont, The Community Broadband Project, I am seeing exciting ways that technology can be used to research, catalog, identify, manage and share these precious historical resources. For example, e-Vermont has provided equipment and software to Martha Carfield Library's Russell Collection in Arlington for one of its digital history projects. The Bridgewater Historical Society is developing a project to first catalog and then share its holdings online.

There is a tremendous and present

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SATURDAY 31 For the 7th, December 31 in a white Grace Potter and the Nocturnals will be ushering in the new year at Higher Ground. But if you can't make new Year's resolutions for another — and GPRN has QPR — catch the **Reggie Funk Band** in action at the Showcase Lounge. Heavy sounds and high intense party make for a soulful good time in 2011.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

**SATURDAY 7****Beyond Borders**

With tunes collected from across by artists and maple sugar shades alike, the first **De Tante Aïen** appears with the multi-talented of Québec's music with fresh beats. French lyrics, varied singing and the universal danceable groove define this duo's style.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

the MAGNIFICENT

MUST SEE, MUST DO THIS WEEK

COMPILED BY CAROLYN FOR

**SATURDAY 31****Get a Move On**

If your New Year's Eve dinner isn't quite the **Hot House**, dancing the band back to being on the heavy shaking has to be the **House in Hues**. An energetic blend of African reggae and electronic beats even those who have left, feel right out of their seats.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

**SATURDAY 31****First Things First**

12 years, **Blacklight** offerings revealing his genius. Following 7 releases and various accolades in 2010 in Burlington, Montclair and 33rd Jersey, Sam once again, the exciting, high-energy performance, caps heart and heart of an illustrious journey below. Read up on where to party down in our handy guide to New Year's Eve.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

SUNDAY 7**Feet First**

While most of the world's watching on TV, a select group of Norwester's choices instead to *save the day* — and the new year — at **RunVermont's** 24th annual **Footrace**. Come to this 5K in costume for an act to spring in your step. Too much to handle before noon? Try a fun run.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

FRIDAY 6 & SATURDAY 7**Out of This World**

With signs pointing to "child's play", a **Planet** and top figures in **Ship Owners & People's** only not only avoid the best of Jim Henson's early "dangerous days" as the New York Times says, but they also teach serious subjects — in this time like *Amoragrad*. Color us intrigued.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

ONGOING**The Space Between**

Maybe it's too 5-4-3-2-1 damage point but artist Adam Puhman has a new perspective on the art of space. He has made art out of his **"Mega Lanes"** exhibit at the BSA Center Outman creates something from nothing (through his playboys, metal lanterns and squares) and adds a little love to his art. He has been busy creating. Be around through February 25.

SEE OUR GUIDE ON PAGE 66

everything else...

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Fare Thee Well

For the dose — all words are off,
From "Fare Thee Well" by Lord Byron

Yeah, yeah, whatever. This is my last column.

You'd think that after writing 184 Fair Games, hundreds of blog and Facebook posts, and thousands of tweets, coming up with a final 1,000 words would be easy, right?

Not really.

Where to start? Where to end?

Deep breath.

I guess I could start at the beginning.

"**PETER FINE**, my predecessor in this space with his long-running Inside Track column, was a fearless reporter and is still a helluva guy," were among the opening lines in my April 2008 inaugural Fair Game. "He's a hard act to follow — though, like my good second act, I don't plan to mimic his routine. Nicknames will probably not be found here, but you can expect independent, behind-the-scenes reporting — with dashes of humor — that holds the high and mighty accountable. As the new column's name suggests, everything and everyone will be fair game, and will be treated fairly."

I hope I lived up to the promise I made in that initial column. When I felt short, readers usually let me know. Politicians, too — some more bluntly than others.

I've had a remarkable run at Seven Days. As I've not fallen in recent weeks, it ain't an easy job to give up.

Writing a political column is truly a gift gig, an industry with few gift gigs left. It's the rare newspaper in Vermont that employs a political columnist. Which is a shame, because there's no better way to keep elected officials of all stripes accountable — and to shine a light on important stories that otherwise go unnoticed or ignored.

Since mentioning my departure, a lot of people have asked: Do you have a favorite column?

After reading, and rereading, them, I can honestly say I don't have one favorite. Although the Fair Game from March 18, 2009, comes pretty close.

I broke a major story in that column, about a \$725 million golden parachute awarded to **WILLIAM H. MILES JR.**, former CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont. Legislators proposed legislation allowing BCBS members to elect

the board of directors and a state intervention. The legislation went nowhere, but the investigation resulted in a \$3 million felony spike for BCBS. No cheap change.

This column also had a First Amendment theme: The Vermont Supreme Court had ruled in favor of two horse loggers protesting at a **JAMES HANCOCK** commencement speech at St. Johnsbury Academy. Republican **KURT WRIGHT** was going head to head with the cops to City Hall Auditorium during a contentious parliamentary debate involving Democratic city councilors **DAVID J. BARNHART** and **JOHN BARNHART**.

**WRITING A
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OF ALL STRIPES ACCOUNTABLE.**

I also pointed out how lawmakers were easily making up to a 5 percent pay-out with nonpayments for meals, lodging and mileage.

The BCBS story was the first scoop in Fair Game. There were others.

Among them, the \$17 million "loan" that Queen City taxpayers unknowingly gave to Burlington Telecom, and the behind-the-scenes story of money, non-quits-sex and hushup involving the spouse of University of Vermont new-former president **IAN FOWLE**.

Fowle resigned mayor ahead of schedule, and UVM launched an internal probe as a result of my reporting UVM's board of trustees adopted a new policy governing the volunteer work of presidential spouses. Additional policies are slated for review, including an updated "compliance director" policy that would give employees more ways to report on-the-job harassment.

At Burlington Telecom, things went from bad to worse. Though in Fair Game reported last week, BT may soon

have a new sugar daddy or, financial partner.

Holding the high and mighty accountable — regardless of party — has been my guiding mission. I exposed the cozy relationship that existed between the Douglas administration's Department of Public Service and the owner of Vermont Yankee. The male plant's top exec was among the guests at Commissioner **DAVID STURGEON**'s annual holiday party.

I shined the same bright light on the Shattuck administration's employment DHS Commissioner **AR MUELLER**. She may have a conflict of interest on rulings related to Green Mountain Power because her husband is a managing partner in the law firm that represents the utility. In addition, several of his **PETER MUELLER**'s top aides or confidantes either work or have worked for GMP.

I've had my share of lawsuits with politicians. The most memorable was with state Auditor Tim Salmon. In response to an innocent email asking why his office was using a state email account to distribute a campaign message, Salmon replied, "Fuck off."

Good times.
My rapport with Salmon has improved to what it was pre-outburst — friendly but professional. In recent days, Salmon even thanked me for holding him, and other state officials, accountable.

"I am a better person from what we've gone through," he said.

Me, too, Tom. Accountable goes both ways.

During my tenure, I've also had the privilege of documenting some of the biggest stories of the past decade, ones that will have an impact on future generations of Vermonters.

Some-sex marriage should have been a no-brainer, but the state produced an emotional legislative session that turned into a vote showdown between lawmakers and then-governor **JIM HOGAN**. No one doubted the Senate could override the governor's veto, but the House was another animal. It needed 100 votes to pass. In the end, the House landed on the right side of history.

It was during the same-sex marriage debate that my tweeting really took off. My tweet-by-tweet report of the House debate served as a news ticker for lawmakers of Vermonters who couldn't fit inside the tiny House chamber.

To be honest, though, my favorites were more low-key news items that went on to affect state policy. Three examples:

• In 2008, a top aide to Gov. Douglas claimed budget cuts weren't affecting the administration's ability to draw down federal funds. Guess what? They were. On the chopping block was a program that hooked up low-income kids with fresh food and supplies.

In response, the Department of Education stepped up to ensure schools could sign up for the federal grants. The new staffers were also able to accept applications for a special federally funded after school meals program championed by Sen. **MARK JARVIS** (D-VT).

• In 2010, I revealed that the private owners of the Wharf Lane apartments in Burlington might sell the building to Champlain College. Wharf Lane was one of thousands of affordable housing complexes built 60 years ago using taxpayer-subsidized mortgages and rental subsidies provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The deal was that at the end of the mortgage, the developers would have the option to sell the low-income housing to the highest bidder.

You know how it goes: The public subsidizes the risk, and the owners pressure the public.

As a result of public scrutiny by Peter Gerns, the landlords returned to the table with a couple of nonspecific housing agencies. With assistance from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, the Burlington Housing Authority bought the building, and the 44 residents of Wharf Lane — and nearly 200 in a nearby building — avoided eviction.

• Finally, in August 2010 I broke the news that the state was falling further and further behind in processing food stamps requests as well as applications for other forms of public assistance. In some cases, people were waiting up to three months for help.

A court order from the 1990s requires the state to respond within 30 days.

More staff were added, the wait times shortened, and people began to get help more quickly.

Did it make a difference?

Months after the story ran, an elderly

woman approached me at the grocery store. "When I read your column, I realized I wasn't alone. I thought I was the only one having problems getting help from the state," she said.

Yeah, it made a difference.

By now you must be adding yourself. Won't be a no!

Of course I will. I'll be lying if I said otherwise. I plan to remain an engaged and informed Vermont citizen — something I've been almost all my life.

I'll have plenty of opportunity to chime in on the events of the day, including politics, thanks to my role as communications director for Chelsea Green Publishing. That authors are at the cutting edge of politics, agriculture, food, farming, the environment, energy and business. It's a provocative bunch, and I'm happy to be associated with it.

I leave Peter Gerns in the extremely capable hands of **ANDY ARNAGE**. My advice to him: Treat your instincts and develop your voice as a writer, and you'll do just fine. And if people tell you that you have big shoes to fill, just nod and smile. Andy will make his own mark with this column by taking it in new directions. I will be an avid reader.

Before I sign off, I want to thank **PHILASADOTT** and **PHILASADOTT** for believing I could follow in the footsteps of a larger-than-life presence. I did my best to prove them right.

Rick is a great editor and boss and I've been lucky to work with the two of them. They have provided consistent guidance and support — right up to and through my decision to leave.

I also want to thank **Seven Days** staffers for welcoming me into their awesome, quirky, caring, hardworking and successful newspaper family.

To you, dear readers, I offer two simple words (no, not those two). Thank you. ☺

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Whatever Happened to...?

Seven Days writers revisit some of the big stories from 2011

By ARNY BROMADE, KEN PICARD, KEVIN J. KELLEY, SHAY TOTTEN AND EVA SOLLBERGER

news travels fast and often doesn't hold the public interest for very long. That's one reason to go through the ritual of recalling what happened in 2011. Remember Mr. House?

The other reason to do so is because the stories you read in these pages — and our blog, *SHUT* — don't end when the reporter files them. They continue to evolve, sometimes taking turns that are more interesting than whatever made us pursue them in the first place.

So in that spirit, our news writers followed up on some of the most compelling stories of the year from the spring floods in Burlington to Occupy Lowell Mountain. Of course that led us to the well-trodden wake of Tropical Storm Irene. No other story this year packed as much punch or led our print and video journalists down so many fascinating bylanes.

POLITICS

Death-With-Dignity Bill Never Had a Chance...

Jan 12 Bedlam of thoughts to follow had high potential the start of the 2011 legislative session at Albany (which Gov. Peter Dinkens pledged to shut with dignity legislation).

support for the 2011 campaign and had organized a gift-to-the-legislature ceremony the year before. The death with dignity National Center targeted Vermont and had most likely state for a legislative victory in 2011 and helped launch a local grassroots campaign through Patient Choices Vermont.

The bill would have given terminally ill patients with fewer than six months to live the option to request a fatal dose of medicine from a Provider of Short-Term Care. A 70-year-old retired nurse with inoperable stage IV lung cancer thought it sounded like a good idea. "It's a good decision. I would think that a natural thing," Dinkens said at death beds in January. "What's sad is that we're not having the legislature would have passed that bill." Dinkens said only one group opposing the bill worried that "physicians would be" was a slippery slope the state should not start down.



Peter Dinkens

Update: Two rights-to-life bills created large numbers of opponents — 44 in the House, 14 in the Senate — but neither got a hearing in committee. House Speaker Skip Stinch said he wouldn't bring it up because it didn't have enough votes to pass, and Senator President Pro Tem John Campbell, a devout Catholic, opposed the legislation.

The same politics — and same leaders — will greet rights-to-life supporters in 2012, but Peter Dinkens' Vermont hasn't been up hope. It's collecting video testimonials from high-profile pals, such as former governor Malcolme Kenney, as well as from average Vermonters who support the legislation.

As for Picard, PCV lobbyist Amy Shollberg reports he is "in pretty bad shape. He's getting radiation, and his voice is almost totally gone. He's just not feeling well at all."



Pittsburgh International Airport

TRANSPORTATION

PBG vs. BTV: Despite Turbulence, the Rivalry Continues

Feb 09 By expanding service, lowering fares and upgrading its facility, Pittsburgh International Airport appeared to be just winging itself as an alternative to Burlington, LaGuardia and BTV. Chicago Florida flights from PBG, which calls itself "America's U.S. Airport," had prospered in a surge in passenger traffic with Canadian and North-Country flights also attracting them to its flight deck by last year. A few PBG customers interviewed in February said they would have flown from BTV had the same prices and destinations been available.

Update: PBG is experiencing turbulence that could delay its arrival as a competitive threat to BTV. Pittsburgh airport manager Tim Long resigned suddenly in September for an explained personal reason. Thirteen months, PennAir Airlines announced it would sever the link between PBG and Boston's Logan airport.

Long's replacement, Christopher Krug, who's been on the job just two weeks, spent both development as a no big deal. Operations at PBG, including an expansion of its terminal, are proceeding smoothly, he says. "We're growing as projected," Krug declares.

Pittsburgh, flying to US Airways Express, will account for only about 10,000 of PBG's 100,000 anticipated departures this year. Krug says. What's more, the names of the federal subsidy PennAir received for serving PBG stipulate that it can't stop flying to Boston until a replacement carrier is found for that route. Krug acknowledges, though, that a PennAir successor might change more than the BTV PBG. Logan round-trip fare listed for mid-January.

The Florida flight, priced as low as \$177 round-trip in January, remains a huge draw. Krug adds. Canadian account for 60 percent of PBG's departing passengers, and their numbers have doubled in the past three years.

In contrast, BTV has experienced a slight decrease in passengers. It reports 430,000 year-to-date "enplanements," down from 434,000 for the same period in 2010 — a 0.8 percent decrease.

— K J K

2011 updates

BUSINESS

Have Audiences Accepted Vermont's New Ticket Tax?

MAR 16 In 2010, the Vermont legislature passed a law requiring nonprofits to add a 6 percent sales tax on ticket purchases. Some patrons said the law, which went into effect on April 1, was the last thing they needed.

Lynne Theatricals and Champion Valley Entertainment Co. claimed that the extra fee could discourage patrons from buying tickets for their shows, especially in a tight economy. Taking note of their worries, Flynn Center CEO John Kilday suggested, "To introduce a 6 percent sales tax at a document just left right."

UPDATES: The legislature softened the projected impact by passing an amendment exempting nonprofits that report less than \$100,000 in ticket sales annually. The law had originally set a \$50,000 threshold. Consequently only about a dozen nonprofits have to charge the tax, notes Vermont Arts Council

executive director Alex Altsch. He estimates that the tax will generate about \$250,000 in new annual revenues for the state maker than the anticipated \$700,000.

Lynce Theatre CEO Sybil Zook says she can't tell if the tax affected sales for the troupe's recent production of *Hairspray*, but she does know that the extra charge has caused "exasperation" among Lynce patrons and staffers. Additional bookkeeping obligations have "cost us staff time, which is another burden for a show-stopping nonprofit."

Kilday says it's not clear if the tax, which amounts to 7 percent in Burlington, represents a tipping point in an economy that hasn't improved. He has heard complaints about the tax — but acknowledges that they've come primarily from people who bought before anyway.

Just before Christmas, the Flynn received a \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor that will be used to replace the theater's 1450 seats.

— K.J.K.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Jury's Still Out on the Reliability of Vermont's Breath Testers

APR 06 MAY 18 Last April, two state drivers who take the who're an potatoes in Vermont's

breath-testing program. In written statements filed in the course of a habeas corpus writ, officers Richard and Amanda Robic claimed that the two technicians responsible for maintaining and calibrating the breath test device used by Vermont police were not properly trained. They said lab supervisors had no way to correct it.

Criminal defense attorney David Sleight used the claims to argue that results from the breath test were unreliable and therefore inadmissible in court. He argued that officers involved in the incidents were reliable even as a makeshift breath test in a South Platte Police station was to determine and give a breath test to all cases in Windsor and Orange counties.

UPDATE: Gov Peter Shumlin responded to the scandal by ordering that the breath-testing program be moved from the Department of Health to the Department of Public Safety. The latter has a fully accredited laboratory. That change is scheduled to take place in March 2012.

Meanwhile, the fundamental question of whether the Department of Health's breath test results are reliable remains unanswered. Sleight's law office, which started out with six discrediting defendants questioning the instruments, now has more than 50 challenges pending at those courts. An evidentiary hearing set on January 30 in Caledonia County will determine whether any or all of those cases can proceed. Sleight filed the first of the motions in June. "It's a ridiculous amount of time," Sleight says of the delay.

— A.B.

HEALTH

Documenting Opiate Addiction in St. Albans

MAY 04 Fred Holmes had been a police officer in St. Albans for 34 years when his patient had known since birth needed help with opiate pain-drug addiction. At the time, 2006, Holmes had no idea what the

10-year-old was talking about. The local doctor was an expert on the subject. Since then, his practice, Howesap Pediatrics, has received more than 4000 calls from doctors seeking help to get their kids off the drugs. Today one-third of Holmes' patients are in recovery from opiate abuse.

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2011 updates

Whatever Happened to...?



Holmes is the only pediatrician in the state practicing Suboxone, a drug that can be very effective in weaning addicts off illegal opiates such as OxyContin, Vicodin and Percocet. Many parents credit Holmes and Suboxone with saving their lives.

UPDATE: Holmes plans to retire next summer, and, so far, no other pediatrician has come forward to replace him as the go-to doctor for treating town opiate addiction with Suboxone. Meanwhile, the 47-year-old doctor will feature

prominently in a documentary on the subject. After making movies about foster children and heroin addiction in Vermont, filmmaker Bob O'Brien is training her camera on opiate abuse in St. Albans.

O'Brien has enlisted help from David Sheff, author of the No. 1 *New York Times* best seller *Beautiful Boy*, about his own son's drug addiction. Sheff is scheduled to visit St. Albans in April to participate in a community meeting related to the film project.

O'Brien, says Holmes, "seems to be everywhere, and this adventure alone has generated a great deal more chatter about our young folks and the mistakes they seem to get themselves into." The doctor isn't about to just walk away. He's working with the Howard Center and the Vermont Opioid Care Initiative to foster a "multidisciplinary team approach to help the youngsters."

— K P

ENVIRONMENT

After the Floods: Is Lake Champlain More Polluted?

MAY 18 There was a lot of concern in Vermont this year for most Calumet and West for Vermont. But the biggest fear was the spring flooding that damaged hundreds of homes on Lake Champlain. Scientists speculated the May incident could have long-lasting impacts on the lake, already an outdoor catalyst.



One scientist in particular expressed concern about the Truax phosphorus leak. It happened in the lake. There was a lot of concern about algae blooms that would be deadly to fish and hazardous to humans and animals. But there were also suggestions of possible construction work.

UPDATE: Eric Smeltzer, the state scientist who monitors lake pollution, says follow-up studies show that on one day in April, twice as much phosphorus poured into the lake from the Winooski River than the amount contributed by 60 water treatment plants on the Vermont side of the lake over a six-month period. Larger-than-normal algae blooms did occur last summer, confirms Mike Winslow, staff scientist for the Lake Champlain Committee.

But neither Smeltzer nor Winslow can specify the effects on the lake's health. No one has any idea, for example, whether carp population did produce a baby boom. Both monitors say ongoing studies will yield data on that, but Smeltzer points out, "The lake certainly can recover from such an event."

Much will depend on how humans respond, he adds. If homeowners "amuse" — for example, by building retaining walls — does lakefront property that could damage shoreline biologists, Smeltzer warns.

Contractors did experience an increase in business, says Amanda They of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Northern Vermont, she can't quantify the windfall, but notes that flooding repairs "helped a lot of people come out of the dark period where there was no work."

— K J K

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Local Playwright's Bus Reaches the End of Its Line

BY ERIC ESKILDSEN



Will (played as Ian Chast) and Emily
Reynolds as Joanne in *The Bus*

When Burlington playwright **JAMES LANTZ** took his play *The Bus on the road* this past autumn, some of his supporters expressed concern over how the work would be received out of town. But mostly city critics were the least of their worries. It was Lantz's decision to stage the play — a poignant tale of homelessness and intolerance — as close as possible to the Western Baptist Church in Topika,

Lantz and company's first stop was New York City, where the show's cast submitted under the direction of John Simpson. The run ran for four weeks in October at the off Broadway venue 59E59 Theaters. The play generated good publicity and generally receptive audiences in the Big Apple, but Lantz also remembers getting "stung" a few times by critics. He also recalls the "freaking dance" he received from a teacher at an elite, all-

**THE MINUTE THAT THERE WAS A CAUSE BEHIND THIS,
PEOPLE BECAME BACKERS OF THE
PROJECT. DOORS OPENED FOR US.**

JAMES LANTZ

Ken, that sounded risky to the point of reckless. The WBCC enjoys a national reputation for vibrant onstage protests, including a 2002 visit to Vermont at the height of the civil unions debate. But Lantz, who had been compelled to restrict *The Bus* to a single-act play two months that made his debut in 2010, was underinformed.

"As a parent, I couldn't handle sitting on the sidelines anymore," he says. "I knew that *The Bus* had been mainly on tour all in Washington [in 2006], so I pulled it out of the drawer."

Lantz also fired up his computer and began using money through Kickstarter, a fundraising website that enables meeting goals on set deadlines. The first effort failed, but a second campaign came through to the tune of roughly \$60,000. And *The Bus* pulled away

girls prep school on the Upper West Side, where he and his crew were and by invitation, over his decision to take the show to Kansas.

Rome, since 2000 miles, \$100,000 in costs, four weeks off Broadway and four Kansas performances later, Lantz is reflecting on a theatrical run he calls "nothing short of a religious experience." The tour involved donating the show's set, designed by **MICHAEL GOODMAN**, all the way in Kansas and back to Vermont. Under Simpson's direction, *The Bus* closed on December 30 in Topika, where Nate Phelps, the estranged son of infamous WBC pastor Fred Phelps, facilitated post-show talk-back sessions.

The Kansas shows were also remarkable, Lantz notes, for drawing together religious believers, nonbelievers, gay people

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well-taught people." "I didn't want the play to preach to the choir," he says. "It was fascinating to take the play to the heart of its drama — literally. These people are right on the front lines."

An email dispatch from the producer's Rochester campaign mentions "a mother whose son died of AIDS, parents who came to 'understand,'" and "students who drove up to three hours to see our show."

Lante estimates that turnout for the talk backs was in the neighborhood of 90 percent of the audience. A recurring theme in these exchanges: "Common" insurance that the WBAC not only doesn't represent their beliefs and values but that the church's hate messaging has actually fostered a more tolerant community.

The response to *The Box* has left Lante feeling profoundly "humbled" but "fulfilled" in helping his creative wheels turning. He says that the play's productions have generated interest for more of them in the heartland — Oklahoma and

Nebraska — as well as in San Francisco, London and South Africa. The playwright is "usually optimistic" about whether *The Box* will sell on, in any event, Lante says he wants to "procrastinate" in either decisions about reaching new audiences while he ponders what his latest trip has taught him.

Some of these lessons have to do with using art to advance a cause — and vice versa. "The minute that there was a cause behind this," Lante recalls, "people became backers of the project. Doors opened for us."

Another lesson is more personal. "Along the way to Kansas, I learned some things about my beliefs, about my people on this side of the fence about my own prejudices of Kansas," he says. "And I have some work to do." ☐

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Post-Irene APR

"Today the roads are back — though not all of Rochester's homes or businesses are. Even on my birthday. A lot of very positive things have happened from the point of view of the community itself." An organization called Grace Mountain Valley Business Community has been formed to help the five-town area comprising Grenville, Hanover, Rochester, Stockbridge and Townfield. And, though there is still "a palpable sense of tragedy," Mackay says there is "a lot more energy toward reaching out, creating a dynamic system by which people can be joined within."

For one thing, the group is seeking state designation as a "disaster haven," figuring out what Mackay calls a gap between 1001 between Killbuck and Warren, the obvious having a disaster welcome center in Rochester to "show people what the area has to offer."

Meanwhile Mackay also managed to get away from the post-Irene fog that straddled the huge festival Art Basel Miami Beach, and visited museums in Chicago and Milwaukee. The trips got her "charged up" about the status of her

own small gallery. Looking at exciting art and successful exhibitions enabled her to bring back "the conviction that it's important for art to reach people as much as it can," Mackay explains. "To make the line between high and low art thinner and thinner."

To that end, she curated three simultaneous holiday exhibits: bronze sculptures, and a few prints, by Middlebury artist **DAVE WARREN**; photographs of Iowa's devastation in the area by **JOHN and KATE FARRINGTON** of Mount Holly, Vt., and a group show of print works, priced under \$1000, by notable regional artists whom Mackay has previously shown at the gallery. Titled "The Small Great Art Walk," the selection features pieces under 30 inches square by the likes of **BOB FRANK MOSS**, **BURRY HARVEY**, **EDMUND KERNER** and **HENRY DODGE**.

Mackay, like everyone else in Rochester, hopes to put the pieces back on the map and into the minds of potential visitors. In her case, visitors who would appreciate, in the old ad, "a little gallery in a big little town." ☐

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Dear Cecil,
I've been reading about the coelacanth, the fish thought to have gone extinct 65 million years ago that turned up in an Indonesian fish market. Do you know any good coelacanth recipes? Seems like this would be a nice change from a fillet-o-fish.

Jim Pawelko, Oklahoma

Here you, living so often you think, right now a truly morose of endangered species would really hit the spot. However, one does have to consider the diarrhea.

Though occasionally sold to chefs in Asian markets, the coelacanth (300-fish length), for the most part, is shunned by fishermen. Paleontologist Peter Ferry, in report on coelacanth releases to that in the Comoros Islands, where several hundred of the rare fish live, the local name for them is gombessa, meaning "babes." That's not for religious reasons but for practical ones. Eating the critters will make you sick.

The flesh of the coelacanth is high in oil, urea, wax esters and other compounds, adding up to an indigestible mess. Fish reports on the consequences of eating coelacanth speak, vaguely of "a kind of diarrhea," but we get a clearer picture from medical accounts of culinary encounters with fish that are similarly constipated. "It was difficult," we're told, "to remain the sea was posing in substantial quantities

in the lower rectum." I say we stop right there.

Habemus in all this sound, one wonders whether it at least partly accounts for the coelacanth's longevity as a species. The earliest recognizable coelacanth lived a something like 300 million years old, while more recent ones date back 66 million years, around the time the dinosaurs disappeared. It was initially thought coelacanth had followed the big-brother into oblivion, but then fishermen landed one off the coast of southern Africa in 1938. In addition to the population living near the Comoros Islands, between Indonesia and Madagascar, a couple more have been found in Indonesia.

The question is why the coelacanth, sometimes referred to as

a living fossil, has evolved to hide in that vast area of time. You'd figure one for dunking it may have stumbled upon the perfect defense mechanism. My toothsome maracah were obliged to adapt quickly but we wind up at lunchtime. But potential coelacanth predators were more likely to conclude: No way am I eating that.

Do Alaska caribou really like the oil pipe line from Prudhoe Bay, which was produced to be such an environmental disaster? Right-wing pundits claim the herd has thrived because the caribou like the warmth, but we're suspicious.

Charlie and Mike, Chicago

And well you might be. The happy caribou may well have calmed in 2008 by seeing often Michelle Bachmann, famous for her vigorous command of

the facts. Each Laramie and Coleman Station holding also chased as. These people have their men to guard, and the idea that the pipeline has been a boon to the caribou goes beyond what I've seen in the professional literature. But the important point is this: While one may argue whether the Prudhoe Bay pipeline helped the caribou, it sure didn't hurt.

The caribou population living in the region through which the pipeline passes, known as the Central Arctic Herd, has thrived since the oil began flowing in the late 1970s. In 1975 the herd numbered just 5,000, as of 2008 it numbered 37,000. No wildlife saw caribou populations more distant from the pipeline such as the Porcupine Herd in the northwest corner of the state have declined. That may specifically suggest that living near the pipeline is a plus, but claims of flourishing

could have another don't trust in an obvious way with the pipeline's passage. For example, the size of the Central Arctic Herd, which had increased at a moderate rate until the early 2000s, doubled between 2002 and 2008. Why, nobody knows.

Wildlife biologists report some behavioral differences in caribou possibly linked to the pipeline, but the overall impression is it didn't make much difference — an interesting commentary in itself, given the predictions of disaster when the pipeline was being planned. One much-touted fear was that as caribou might rupture the pipe, but a 2002 quake registering 7.9 on the Richter scale caused only minor damage and no spill. The biggest issue connected with the pipeline's passage in hand is all namely the 1995 wreck of the Exxon Valdez.

None of this is to suggest caribou defenders have nothing to worry about. Whatever may be happening in Alaska, the worldwide caribou population is on a steep decline, with average herd size having fallen 55 percent from historical peaks. Damaged weather monitoring from global warming is widely linked.

Using the above facts, you can draw whatever conclusions you see. An optimist can say the political process worked — environmental concerns didn't warrant canceling the pipeline, but the niggling led the builders to take precautions. To which the pessimist will reply: Get out. Because of the headlong rush to exploit the fossil fuel subsoil, of which this project was a prime example, the caribou are still worried.



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Chantelle at the Crossroads

As we stood silently, side by side at the baggage carousel, I also let a glance at the customer I would be driving to Montreal. Chantelle was as beautiful as her name: a short-limbed woman with dark, red eyes. If she were a little taller, I thought, she could be a model. Looking just her beauty for a moment, I noticed the woman appeared exhausted, as if she hadn't slept much for days.

As if on cue, she let out a deep sigh. I said, "How long is it?" and that's what broke the ice.

"I am tired," she said, with a touch of a French accent. "I don't think I've slept five hours over the whole week I was in LA."

"Was it work trip?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm trying to launch a fashion line I've designed. Oh, that's my luggage coming around."

I pushed her stuff into the cart, and she accepted my offer to wheel it out to the car for her. She followed me carrying her thickly padded garment bag. Thinking about it now, I probably took the easier job. As we exited the terminal, everything looked familiar—the suitcase, the garment bag, the woman, her coat. Everything except me.

We loaded her stuff into the truck, and she took the shotgun seat. (If we drove—no hours, give or take, to Montreal. When I'm driving, an especially attractive woman, I sometimes worry that she will think I'm only making conversation because—well, even like to talk with attractive women, I take notice in the fact that I've never bit on a female customer and never will. Plus, I think I'm fairly adept at reading social cues. If a customer, male or female, indicates he or she doesn't want to converse, I get it and button my lip.)

"How did the trip go?" I asked. "Did you accomplish what you set out to?"

"The trip went fine, except for the last 24 hours, which have been a fading nightmare. My flight took up with me by phone while I was waiting for my connection at JFK. My fucking cellphone! Can you believe it? Michel was supposed to pick me up in Burlington. That's why I'm taking you, eh?"

"Aww, that's crazy. Were you, like, totally stressed, or were there signs?"

"Things started going bad last night. He called me in the hotel room late, after midnight, and my assistant, Jojo, picked up. By the time Jacques picked up the phone, Michel was freaking out about him being in my room so late. But it was nothing! We were just working late. Anyway, Jacques works for Michel's company in Montreal.

Montreal. In the darkness, in the bubble of the taxi, I tried to read the emotional temperature. Did Chantelle still want to talk, or at least vent?

"I just don't know what I'm going to do," she said, her deeper palpable. "He's booked a hotel room for me. He doesn't even want me to come to the apartment."

"Do you have friends or family in town?" "Well, my mother, but we're not close. She used to be a stenographer and, before that, a model. She's not an expert woman, really. On a layover in Europe, she met my father, which from America, and they got married and settled in Montreal, where my mom is from. They divorced when I was 3, and my dad went back to America. I would visit with him every summer. Anyway, my

"What about friends? Anyone you can talk to?" I asked Chantelle.

"The last of my friends over the past year I had this big fight with my close girlfriend the week before I left on this California trip. So I have no one."

Chantelle wasn't smiling for my pity, and somehow that made her plight of the more heartrending. She was simply relating the facts of her life as she saw it at that moment.

In the distance, Montreal came into view, glimmering like the Emerald City of Oz from the field of poppies. As we crossed the Pont Champlain, the scenic search lights atop the Place Ville Marie pointed the cityscape. Chantelle directed me to the hotel that her new co-funder had booked for her. It was just a real four-star establishment. Somehow I didn't think that would even slightly ease her broken heart.

"I do have a plan," Chantelle said as we stood behind the cab with her luggage and she paid me the fare. "I think I'm going to move to Austin to live with my father. I have two siblings there who work for a design company. This is mostly the work I've done, web design. They've told me there's a place for me in the company if I would consider it. So maybe that's all for the good. I've had it with Montreal—I really have."

I took her right hand in both of mine, looking into her sad and misty eyes. I said, "Good luck to you, Chantelle." ☺

IN THE DARKNESS, IN THE BUBBLE OF THE TAXI, I TRIED TO READ THE EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE.

Michel basically lost him to me for this trip. I mean, seriously. Michel's last focus checked on him, on his life, on a big note with that. But I couldn't believe that I'd lost the wedding."

I did for this woman who was clearly in emotional shock. I've never forgotten the feeling of my own longtime colleague friend broke up with me. It was like a slap in the face to the head. But at least I saw it coming over our last few months together. Twenty-four hours ago, Chantelle was dreaming of her wedding. Then, in an instant, it was all over. That's too much to absorb. And by coincidence? That's not a coincidence. I was kind of having Michel, and I'd never met the man.

We made it across the border with me a touch and Montreal being the money streets, flat road that leads north to

Montreal was very off the beat and she would leave me with strangers, and I would cry and cry and cry. Literally. I thought, oh, so I just don't feel anything. So you see."

Chantelle passed for a moment and chuckled, which threw me a little, given the painful history she was recounting. "I have what they call major childhood issues."

The thought drifted through my mind that we are all products of our childhoods. This pattern repeats themselves over and over, sometimes even getting passed down from one generation to the next. This seems to be the human condition, and I find it tragic. But it is possible, though not easy, to step out of the drama, to aware what's been going on and change the script. This I have done myself, albeit late in life. Some late than never.

HACKIE is a technology columnist that you can follow on Twitter @hackie. You can also find him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/hackie.
96 He needs Jerrogan Portage's email: hackie@jerryportage.com.

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Feedback

need to assist small towns Vermont has moral accords with the preservation, management and sharing of their collections. Personally, organizations and entities such as the Vermont Historical Society, Vermont Department of Libraries, University of Vermont's Fleming Museum and Center for Digital Initiatives, Vermont Wildlife Center and Killings Farm and Museum, among others, provide examples and potential resources to help communities preserve their history in rich and meaningful new ways, dignified. I want to encourage anybody with sharing our Vermont heritage on the Internet!

Philip Petty
Pittsford, VT

Lyme Lite AcY

Lyme disease is a serious disease that manifests differently in each patient [“Your Time to a Single to Meet Previews Vermont’s Tick Problem Is Growing.”



December 7). It is also frequently misdiagnosed, as it mimics lupus, MS, rheumatoid arthritis, rheomyeloma and chronic fatigue. In “Ticked Off” (June 23, 2010), Ken Hovind mentions the documentary *Under Our Skin*, which can now be watched for free on YouTube. It covers little-known information such as air-borne transmission of Lyme. Under Our Skin should be required viewing for any health conscious person I seriously wish I had known the risk moving to and traveling around New England (though the disease is now in every state in the country). Many doctors, including local doctors, use tests that fail to detect up to 80 percent of Lyme disease cases. I visited numerous doctors locally, but, partly due to my strong immune system, went undiagnosed for five years.

Only 15 to 50 percent of Lyme disease sufferers remember a tick bite. Two thousand twelve is supposed to be the worst year for Lyme disease. Visit Doka,

org for up-to-date information and to learn how to find a Lyme-literate MD. I hope that one doctor will take the steps to learn to recognize and treat this disease so patients don't have to leave the state to get good care.

The list of symptoms your recent article is incomplete. A more thorough article would cover a wider range of symptoms. Doctors not being covered on our doctors' office, it would be helpful if there were more accurate media coverage. Relate with yourself about Lyme disease this winter be prepared.

J. M. Davies
South Burlington

GMP Put S SAFELY for St

In his November 30 story, Ken Hovind about Union Mountain Power's approach to workplace safety and the company's relationship to state and federal safety agencies (“Why Aren't Vermont's Wind Turbines State Inspected? Ask Green Mountain Power?”). GMP is a recognized leader in workplace and employee safety in Vermont and nationally. In 2005, GMP reached Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) certification through the Vermont Department of Labor, Project WorkSAFE and federal OSHA. This recognition opens all GMP facilities, including our Seaburg wind farm, and has been recognized twice.

Safety is central to everything we do, and we open our doors to regulators. As part of the SHARP program, every facility inspected from top to bottom; all sites are visited. Every safety policy is evaluated, all employees have a role, and the OSHA Local 300 has strong presence. This year summer, GMP invited friends OSHA to participate in an annual safety training held at our Seaburg wind facility. OSHA sent staff from Boston and Washington. Following the visit, the OSHA team expressed their confidence in our programs and in the great work and relationships created with Vermont OSHA and Project WorkSAFE. They have asked us to partner with them in an effort to educate OSHA about safe operation of wind installations. At GMP, safety compliance is a minimum expectation, and understanding the rules is a very basic component of that. However, providing our employees with the safest possible workplace means that we go beyond compliance. That's what we do today, and that is what we will continue to do in the future.

John Tedesco
South Burlington

John Tedesco is safety manager at Green Mountain Power.

St.Airw AY to Troub LEF

[Re “Why Aren't Vermont's Wind Turbines State Inspected? Ask Green Mountain Power,” November 30]. It appears that Vermont's OSHA sign are pretty clear about this—21V.S.A. § 152 “New installations, annual inspections and registrations.” (a) A new inspection shall not be placed in operation until it has been inspected by an elevator inspector or a flyer, then the installer, and a certificate of operation has been issued.”

But frankly, I'm a bit more concerned about the untrained personnel ladder work to the elevator in the picture. OSHA regs (29 CFR 1915.27(a)(1)(ii)) require that “ladders or wells... shall be provided on ladders of more than 20 feet.” As a technical rescue specialist who has climbed the food ladder inside the Seaburg wind towers and performed industrial rescue training for Yankee Atomic, I have a healthy respect for the danger and difficulty of ascending long vertical ladders. Where is VOSHAA in this picture?

Robert J. Manning
Winooski

HAIL KALE

Check-60-A's shameless attempt to stop Vermont wind is the Hailor Moore from hell, screaming the words “eat more kale” on signs and bumper stickers makes me want to...well, eat more kale [Hill Daily, November 23 & December 7]. Check-60-A's so-called landmark “eat more” slogan makes light of a very serious matter: animal suffering. Both cows and chickens can agree that people should eat more plant based foods.

Unlike beef and chicken, kale is cholesterol free, extremely low in calories, and exceptionally high in antioxidant vitamins A, C and E. It's also a good source of calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and other essential minerals. The fiber-filled super veggie can help on seniors lower their blood cholesterol level, combat heart disease and cancer, and maintain healthy eyes.

And kale is not only nutritious, it's delicious, too. This king of greens is great sautéed in olive oil, sandwich and soups. You can toss this pasta or on pizza, or use it in place of spinach or kale in your favorite recipes. Support local agriculture. See potting for free

recipes featuring kale and other whole—some vegan foods.

Heather meese
North Fair

More works for the PETA Foundation

Democrat Adm S Pm NGP

I am writing in response to Judith Lonnard's Feb. 19 column “Is Greed the Illusion?” (December 7). Misleading one's individual gain regardless of the cost to others is the simplest definition of greed. One can easily see that greed is the cornerstone of all dynasties, corporations, empires, etc., through out history. Living honest, though, it is also one of the ugliest ways that we organize ourselves. We actually thrive in spite of the power of greed, not because of it. Our families would never survive if we were not led to greed entirely. Just because my man is elderly and has a lovely one doesn't mean that I'll invade it, and he is the basement and take over for some reason we submit to the domination of genetic greed cells—except at levels of family and community where we have a self-interest “fall-back.”

The state of absolute corporate domination in which we find ourselves requires a sophisticated domination and control system. The myth and no permission that makes up much of our worldview go hand in hand with blood wars, racism, sexism, misogyny and anti-Semitism. These are the means by which a very few people can

control most of the world's wealth and power.

Many people are cognizant that the “group thinking” of imperials not committed in the free-form, open discussion, unbridled by the Occupy movement, but the Covellian or legions to corporate rule, false democracy and sloppy bullsh*t.

To save ourselves, a deconstruct reconstruction of rational analysis is very much called for. To expect that choosing the means of our own demise will satisfy our need for self-destruction and meaningful democracy is no longer realistic. The year 2012 need not be filled with paranoid apocalyptic, but should be the start of a “deconstructive spring.”

Isabel Hartley
East Fought





Boom Operator

By Alice E. HAVITT

TOM SWENSON, 27, is hard at work in the computer in his spacious office. He spends much of his 20-hour workweek behind a desk, laboring on a program that would look familiar to music or film editors. But Pinkie Fireworks has far more complex needs than just data. Pro Tools at Mount Cast. Surrounded by dozens of the latest PFC piping, the pyrotechnician is plotting out a New Year's Eve fireworks show.

Swenson's father, Dave, opened the first of three Northstar Fireworks businesses in East Montpelier in 1986—the other two are in Fairfax and St. Johnsbury. Just more than a year ago, Tom Swenson perfected the software system he uses to design displays that color the sky to the beat of musical accompaniment. When he's finished, after as many as 80 hours of work, he uploads the file to the digital Pyrotec Firing System, which will send off the fire just as he plotted, usually for nearly more than 15 minutes.

Swenson will personally shoot a show at Jay Peak this December 31. The company will put on fireworks

displays at another 14 locations throughout New England that night. Unleashing 6 p.m. and midnight shows for the city of Burlington. On the same evening, countless consumers will set off fireworks they purchased at one of Northstar's stores.

Brought upon the business, Swenson says he wishes there had been a school to teach him the ins and outs of fireworks. Now he's teaching others. On December 27, Swenson will hold an informational session at the Steak House Restaurant in Barre for those interested in becoming "lead shooters" for Northstar's busy summer season. Throughout the winter and spring, he'll teach the science and safety of his volatile profession.

Seven Days checked in with Swenson to learn what makes a pyrotechnician tick, in his home.

Is it
Tom Swenson

Is it
East Montpelier

It
Pyrotechnician,
Northstar
Fireworks

SEVEN DAYS: You said started the business. Did you always know you'd shoot fireworks for a living?

TOM SWENSON: I think I did. I went to all of his shows growing up. That's part of the reason I'm good at designing the shows. I've seen thousands of them.

SD: People seem to think selling fireworks isn't legal in Vermont. What are the rules?

TS: In the state of Vermont, you need a permit to possess and shoot fireworks. The permit is something you can get from your local fire department or town office. We have [consumers] sign a release—[as confirmation] that the buyer understands the law.

SD: What's your favorite kind of fireworks?

TS: I really like the individual display shells, and the effect I like the most is called a chrysanthemum. It's like a blue chrysanthemum, then there's a yellow chrysanthemum inside. Blue is the hardest color to make. I think the chemicals are hard to find. The metals are unique.

SD: What's the difference between an "artistic" and a technician?

TS: It doesn't take too much to get fireworks in the air—you've just got to light them. To be an artist, you need to understand the chemical compounds of the fireworks and understand what the effects are. Then you can start putting pictures.

SD: What's the biggest, craziest display you've done?

TS: In 2010, I shot a show for the town of East Montpelier. The town gathers in a place called Rally Day. That's a show we usually do for training for our employees, so it's a closed show.

That year, there were 50 racks [to hold the explosive mortar tubes]. It was probably close to 1,000, 1,500 shells on the body of the show. It was a four-day setup. We had close to a 20-man

crew on the show. It was all electronically fired and choreographed.

That was kind of a weird show, 'cause I was holding the Long Trail at that time. We stayed up for a few days straight, then I went back and finished a 200-mile hike.

SD: Have you ever done a display that didn't work out the way you wanted?

TS: I've done a couple where maybe the weather didn't work out so well, or the site might not have [had] the best visibility for the crowd, and they didn't get to see the full effects. That doesn't happen too often. This isn't just a job, it's a huge passion of mine, so every show gets 100 percent, whether it's a little backyard show or a town's 250th anniversary show.

SD: What makes you so passionate?

TS: The color and shape of the crowd. I'll spend hours and hours on one show. Everyone has a memory of sitting on a blanket on the Fourth of July watching a fireworks show. If you arrive, at parties or more celebration, you shoot the show, and, as soon as it's done, the crowd cheers and then they go home. It's pretty awesome to see how many people you can make smile. Then there's that little bit of adrenaline in lighting a shell. It's all these things. ☺

1 "Lead" is a technical term used in fireworks to describe a fuse or a fuse that is used to ignite a fuse. Suggested you go to the website www.fireworks.com for more information.

2 Vermont's largest fireworks retailer is located at www.fireworks.com.

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Fogel Falls, but Won't Say Farewell to UVM

may 25 In February, University of Vermont President Daniel Fogel announced his resignation, effective in July 2012. His plans changed as a result of a Seven Days investigation, which depicted a sexually charged relationship between his wife, Rachel Kahn-Fogel, and a top UVM faculty star.

The paper's investigation unraveled an internal campaign to make the findings of which Kahn was made public in August. By then, Fogel had stepped down from his post, albeit on schedule, assisted by a very high price tag that promises to pay him more than \$300,000 as he exits through the door of 2012.

Fogel also received a \$780,000-a-year faculty appointment in the English department—over \$45,000 more than the most highly paid professor—with the expectation that he'd begin teaching in January 2013.

Fogel's severance package, and his "bold" and "they will need" inquiry prompted much debate on campus about the affordability and future of the state's only public university. UVM leaders named former provost John E. Kinsley as interim president and began a search for a permanent, full-time president.

update: In October, UVM trustees adopted a new presidential-up-close policy that prohibits the oversight as husbands and wives who want to raise money, coordinate alumni events or engage in other aspects of university life. Their volunteer work must be approved by the board and not include any supervisory authority.

The UVM Presidential Search Council has recently spent a few days in Boston interviewing 12 candidates for the top job on campus. A list of finalists will be made public in early 2012.

Meanwhile, former president Fogel dispelled rumors that he might forgo the teaching gig due to the bad press caused by his departure. He told *Seven Days* he's been assigned to teach classes on English Romantic poetry and Henry James next fall. A James scholar, Fogel is working on a new biography about the famous American author.

"I am currently directing an honors thesis with a UVM undergraduate," wrote Fogel in an email, "and am greatly looking forward to returning to teaching at UVM in the next academic year."

BUSINESS

Accounting Questions Percolate at Green Mountain Coffee

Jun 15 Waterbury-based Green Mountain Coffee Roasters began 2011 under a cloud of suspicion as an ongoing investigation of its accounting practices by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. But rumors haven't seemed to ease. Rather, media outlets by the value of the company's stock listed at \$34.48 a share on January 3 to \$47.04 a share on May 21.

But one bean counter smelled trouble. Sam E. Antar, the accountant who cooked the books at appliance chain Darty's in the '90s, claimed he had discovered rumors as accounting "irregularities" in GMR's financial filings. He posted them on his blog, *White Collar Fraud*, and leaked them in a letter to the SEC. Then, accused GMR of selectively disclosing financial information, in violation of SEC regulations.

Antar says, "I'm not going to say [other companies] such as Dow Chemical or 3M don't compound errors and misstatements," reports. But his worries over the spring and summer didn't have a lasting negative effect on the coffee company. By September '10, GMR's stock had soared to \$51.62 a share.

update: Green Mountain Coffee's stock took a hit in October—but not because of Antar's warnings. David Kishore, the hedge fund manager famous for predicting the downfall of Lehman Brothers, preannounced the plunge. In a postcard-like at an investor conference, Kishore criticized GMR for overpaying, overpaying and "poor transparency." GMR's shares promptly slid from \$50 to a low of \$34 before rebounding.

In Antar's opinion to say, "I told you so!" Not exactly. David Kishore is a brilliant man. He's an 800-pound gorilla whose track record of forecasting



Sam E. Antar

out trouble like Lehman Brothers agenda for itself," Antar says. "If Kishore were a white-collar criminal like me, he'd be even faster and smarter. Unlike Kishore, I have firsthand experience about how the game is played on both sides of the line."

A year later, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has still not reached a conclusion about accounting practices at GMR.

—A.B.

ENVIRONMENT

Montpelier Gun Club Targets Its Biggest Critic

Jul 13 Both David Kinsley and Ryan Ryan's famed victory last spring when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finally cracked down on lead pollution at the Montpelier Gun Club—the result of Ryan's 10-year letter-writing campaign. The 65-year-old retiree from Highgate was a trophy-winning trapshooter who became an unlikely mission evangelist after learning about the dangers of lead poisoning. Gun for Ryan's efforts, the gun club was forced to erect a shot container keep lead pellets from leaking into the adjacent Winooski River.

When Ryan returned to the mountains on July 31 to see if the new barrier was working, gun club members called the cops. He was cited for trespassing on club property—an offense punishable by three months in jail or a \$1,000 fine. Ryan maintained his

innocence, saying he was standing in a public wasteland not private property, and he filed a "motion to dismiss" with the court. But club members say they clearly saw Ryan do it, so they took the case.

update: The state dismissed the trespass charge on September 12—but Ryan didn't find that out until November 7, when he drove 86 miles to Barre for his next scheduled court appearance. Naturally, Ryan wrote a letter to the Washington County State's attorney to find out why the charge was dropped—and why he wasn't told sooner—but he had not heard back as of December 17. The district hasn't dented him from trespassing the riverbanks for now. "The next time they shoot, I want to go down there," he says.

—A.B.



David Kinsley

—A.B.

HEALTH

Windpipe Transplant Candidate Waits... and Waits

AUG 03

Rachel Phillips performed with some of the world's most prestigious dance companies, including the Royal and Swedish Ballets. Now she's in the struggle for the former ballerina and Burlington resident, the sufferer from a degenerative, life-threatening condition called Birt-Hogg-Darke syndrome. This genetic disorder affects her body's connective tissues and weakens her airway, but it also, increasingly, Phillips will risk suffocating. She has undergone dozens of procedures to stay alive.

In July, Phillips met the only doctor in the world capable of saving her life. From Sweden, Perla Hartzbaum, who works at a Swedish hospital, was enablen for an international conference on regenerative medicine. His groundbreaking procedure uses a patient's own stem cells to grow a replacement organ—in Phillips' case, a new trachea. Hartzbaum agreed to perform the surgery for her in Sweden—at no charge. But Phillips and her husband, Steven, still need to raise about \$400,000 to cover other medical and travel expenses.

UPDATE: Phillips is still waiting for the cutting-edge surgery that could save her life. Meanwhile, she underwent a trachea-splint procedure to relieve pressure on her cerebrospinal fluid, a condition known as intracranial hypertension, which may explain her debilitating headaches. Phillips' doctors may also try another procedure before she undergoes the transplant, the fear of which could happen as early as



Rachel Phillips, Steven Phillips, Perla Hartzbaum

February provided the Phillips more enough money.

Steven has tried to interest national media outlets in Rachel's plight, to no avail. But thanks to social networking, fundraisers are happening worldwide. Dan, in a London bar, challenged men to shove their legs, another, in Chicago, unveiled a gourmet pastry contest. Upcoming fundraisers are also happening in the U.S., Norway, Canada and Australia. In all, the couple has raised about \$90,000 toward their \$400,000 goal. They have 1500 Facebook friends.

"A lot of these people have BDS themselves," Steven notes, "and are looking at Rachel as a kind of focal point of what's happening with the research."

— K.P.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Two Busted Cops Turn in Their Badges

AUG 10

Last summer, Steven Days' reputation as an alarming trend: local cops. Counting down from drunk driving and assault to possession of child pornography. This attorney general's office confirmed it was prosecuting more than 100 cases against Vermont police officers at that moment, though any other point in recent history. One was Joshua L. Davis, a 39-year-old state trooper charged with child pornography. Although off duty when he left a Rutland bar and slammed his truck into a parking meter, Davis admitted to police that he had had two, maybe three drinks. He faced two years in jail or \$2,500 fine. Another cop, On a state's County sheriff's office, Robert E. Underdown, 54, was



Joshua L. Davis

charged with neglect of duty and unlawful trespass for barging into an ex-lover's house in a police rig and interrogating her car with no lawful purpose. Potential punishment: three years in prison.

UPDATE: On November 4, Laramie pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of driving under the influence of alcohol. He was fined \$500. He has since resigned from the state police. Underdown pleaded guilty on November 16 to one misdemeanor count of neglect of duty. He had already resigned from office when he received his punishment from the court: a \$500 fine and a suspended jail sentence.

— A.B.



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All About Irene

AUG 28 By any measure, Irene was a game changer for Vermont. The tropical storm, and the damage it inflicted, has a history to make almost no one in Vermont, dumped more than a foot of rain in a matter of hours. Surviving buildings broke and lay ruins into raging rapids.

When the storm finally departed, three people were dead and more than 4000 houses had been damaged or destroyed. Irene shredded 16 sections of state highway and 34 bridges, some of which were swept, completely and covered in debris.

Damages resulting from Irene are expected to approach \$600 million. Sen. Peter Shumlin has predicted such storms will become Vermont's "new normal" in the years to come.

Although state officials have been lauded for their speedy hurricane recovery efforts, many of Irene's victims are still struggling to get back into their homes and businesses. Some of the hardest-hit are still months away from what might be considered a full recovery.

This week, seven days crested back with several of the Vermonters who were injured for homes and homes in the days after Irene to see how they're faring. Which is slowly recovering, the storm's collective toll is rising and undeniable. It is forever a part of the physical and psychological landscape of the state.

JERRY AYERS, WATERBURY Ayers' Waterbury house was built by his great-great-grandparents, his grandfather, Gleason "Gus" Ayers, had to enclose a house up the street during the Great Flood of 1927. Along with many other houses on Railroad and Elm streets in Waterbury, Jerry Ayers' place flooded during Irene. Water inundated the basement, which housed Jerry's pottery studio, and reached thigh high on the first floor.



The Ayers family — Jerry, his wife, Georgia, and son, Fletcher — have been working on their house since the flood-water receded, the work is about 85 percent complete. The kitchen is finished, and the whole family was able to cook and celebrate Thanksgiving there. They've been back in the house for about a month.

Dumpsters and contractors are still visible in the neighborhood, which is only about one-third occupied.

Jerry Ayers says he's looking forward to getting back into his pottery studio, which he projects will happen at the beginning of February. In the meantime, he's been teaching pottery parties at St. Michael's College and Burlington City Arts.

Ayers' grandchildren, Gus, died two days after Thanksgiving. He got to see the work in progress but not its completion.

LISA SULLIVAN, BURLINGTON Sullivan and her husband, Phil Taylor, own Bartley's

Books, which was gutted when floodwaters raged through Wilmington. Amazingly, their previous bookstore — the Book Cafe in Bennington — was lost to a fire in April 2011. Despite their back-to-back calamities, the couple decided to rebuild. Taylor has done much of the work himself.

Many Wilmington businesses are still closed, but Christmas lights are twinkling around town, Sullivan reports. Some retail stores have reopened in recent weeks, the restaurants appear to be taking longer. The town office are still in their temporary location — in an old drugstore near the library's supermarket.

Fortunately, Bartley's reopened at 10 a.m. on Black Friday. Readers were lined up on the door, holding signs that read "Bartley's or bust" and "We Love Bartley's!" Sullivan says the community support has been tremendous and the nonpeople have made it clear that they want her community bookstore to succeed.

Apparently customers don't mind shopping in a construction site.

ADAM HANSEN, BURLINGTON Like many of his fellow Isle Verde farmers, Hansen of Adam's Berry Farm endured a devastating one-two punch in 2011. Over a period of two months last spring, his fields flooded five times, drowning hundreds of strawberry, raspberry and blueberry plants, along with grapevines and young cherry trees. His hoop-house and field strawberry crops were swept away, and his summer and fall raspberry varieties succumbed to root rot.

By July, Adam's Berry Farm was recovering well. Then, at the end of August, Irene hit. Floodwaters from the tropical storm surged through Hansen's fields and swamped every plant. In some areas, the water was chest deep, rendering those berries he managed to salvage from the spring "indisectable" and unfit for human consumption. In the course of one season, Hansen had lost some 2500 pounds of fruit.

Despite such devastating losses, Hansen is grateful for the help he's received. "The outpouring of community support has been tremendous for everyone that has been impacted by the flooding this fall," he writes in a email. "I keep on thinking about fortunate we are to be surrounded by such an amazing and caring collection of people."

That said, Hansen has decided that the business is "not sustainable for perennial production. The combination of the high water table and continual flooding makes it simply too risky for long-term permanent plantings."

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2011 updates

Business is currently resuming alternative sites on higher ground in Chittenden County. His goal is to stay close in Burlington so he can continue to serve his devoted supporters.

"The movement and expansion are potentially very exciting," he says.

MEGAN SCHULZ, NORTHFORD: Northeast experienced disproportionate devastation during Tropical Storm Irene. In all, 35 houses were destroyed in a town of 16,000 people. Among them, the 1920 home of Megan Schulz and her parents, John and Annette. The floodwaters resulted in what Megan calls a "forced remodel." Most of the first floor had to be gutted. The kitchen was a total loss.

Today, Megan is living just up the road, in North Fytima. She doesn't expect to be back in her office, which was based in her parents' garage, for another six months. Her event-planning business has contracted, however. Most recently, she organized the Moretown Artisan Sale, which included a fundraiser for four artists affected by the floods. Her Wet Paint Fund raised about \$3,000. "It's not a huge amount," she admits, "but this time of year, especially, every little bit helps."

Schulz's parents are back in the home, which now has new walls, windows, appliances and insulation. Although Thanksgiving was celebrated elsewhere, the family expects to have Christmas at home this year.

Schulz adds, "My mom is very excited because she gets to pick out wallpaper."

JOHN RICHEL AND FRANK BECKER, NORTHFORD: In the days after Irene, Seven Days found 63-year-old DiCarlo sweeping the steps of a house otherwise devoid of walls, floors and insulation. During the storm, floodwaters from the Mill River translated the newly renovated, 1900 home, sweeping away its back deck and many of its furnishings. The mudroom was knocked off the foundation.

DiCarlo had full flood insurance and a FEMA determination that the house was "substantially damaged," qualifying him for additional federal assistance. Despite all that, repairs are on hold until spring. Part of the delay is owing to the flood insurance FEMA steps made until the insurance settles up. Also, FEMA mandates flood-mitigation measures as a condition of assistance. In Becker and DiCarlo's case, that includes raising the rest of the house, moving all of the utilities to the first floor and pouring a new foundation, which can't be done until

the ground thaws.

Now was dealing with FEMA? DiCarlo says the federal workers have been helpful every time he's reached out for help. "That hasn't been the experience for some," he acknowledges, "but it has been for me."

DiCarlo and Becker are renting a small, furnished apartment in Stowe, not far from their business, Sunflower Natural Foods of Waterbury Center.



WILLIAM HARRIS
SUNFLOWER

HEATHER NELSON, NORTHFORD: The 72-year-old native Vermonter was featured on the cover of the September 28 issue of Seven Days. A widower who's lived in his house for 37 years, he had no flood insurance and was unsure of how he was going to find the money to fix his house, which sustained damages valued in the tens of thousands.

Though he wasn't back living in the house by mid-December, he expected it to be by the end of 2011, and is doing all the reconstruction work with the help of one laborer.

Initially, Nelson was reluctant about not accepting assistance from FEMA. He didn't want the federal government telling him how he should reconstruct his house. As he put it at the time, "I'll rebuild and fight the consequences later."

Although Nelson is still fiercely self-reliant, his attitude toward FEMA appears to have changed. "I had to do something," he explains, plus FEMA reimbursed some of his rebuilding requirements. Nelson no longer has to fill in the cellar or raise the entire house by several feet.

With estimated reconstruction costs expected to exceed \$40,000, Nelson says he's more open to accepting help from Uncle Sam. "You've got to put it all back together and just hope to hell it never happens again."

— K P R E S

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Whatever Happened to...? SEP 2013

LAW ENFORCEMENT

After Controversial Traffic Stop, Vermont Strives to Be More Immigrant Friendly

SEP 13 Vermont dairy farms depend on the labor of migrant workers—in some legal status and some undocumented. One has emerged as a powerful spokesman for the migrant cause: Danilo Lopez, a 23-year-old undocumented Mexican man who is employed on a Charlotte farm riding horses and working in a stable. In April, he was arrested on a controversial federal immigration enforcement stop near the Vermont-New York border. Lopez refused to leave. Police threatened to arrest him for not speaking up for his rights. Lopez, who is a native of the Dominican Republic, was released after a 24-hour detention. He is now in the United States, but he is still in the process of applying for asylum.

In September, he and a fellow migrant worker, Antonio Mesa Sandoval, were riding in the backseat of a car traveling on I-88. A state trooper pulled the driver over for speeding and equity submitted the car passengers might not be U.S. citizens. So he turned them over to U.S. Border Patrol.

Lopez and Mesa Sandoval were released, but the 21 Migrant Farmworker Solidarity Project claimed that racial profiling was behind the traffic stop and filed a complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission. The state police launched an investigation of the proper protocol to determine whether he had followed the agency's "best practice" policy.

The fallout for the Hispanic border face a federal immigration judge in Boston.

UPDATE: A state police committee closed state trooper Jared Hatch of wrongful arrest in October, concluding that his questioning of the immigrant was not motivated by race and was consistent with state police policy. Weeks later, one of the state's most prominent law enforcement officials, Vermont State Police Chief, announced a new state police policy that bans troopers from asking suspected illegal immigrants for papers unless they are suspected of another crime. That makes Vermont one of the most immigrant-friendly states in the U.S.

On November 18, the Human Rights Commission released results of its investigation, finding "reasonable grounds" that state police discriminated against the farmworkers based on "ethnic national origin, race and color." The first step in a possible civil lawsuit. Mesa Sandoval went back to Mexico voluntarily in November. Lopez is still here with a Department of Justice hearing set for February 10. On December 10, Lopez received a Human Rights Hearing award at a Human Rights Day event at the University of Vermont.

—A.B.

HEALTH

Drug Shortage Improving but Not Fixed

SEP 28 More than 500 types of all U.S. hospitals reported at least one drug shortage in the first six months of 2013. More than half of them experienced shortages of more than 20 drugs, according to a survey by the American Hospital Association. This includes some Vermont hospitals, as well as New Hampshire's Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center where Dr. David Lander is a patient with stage IV breast cancer. The hospital ran out of Oxal, a cancer-fighting drug, and had to cancel two of Lander's visits, leaving him in a quandary about how to secure stock. Oxal is made in a small facility in Vermont. When just one of the health care system's hundreds of other drugs is in short supply, drug shortages claim patients' lives.



Dr. David Lander and Gregory Landrum.

UPDATE: In October, President Obama signed an executive order directing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to streamline the process of approving generic drugs and allowing the Department of Justice to investigate alleged price gouging on the part of pharmaceutical companies. On December 18, the administration issued an interim rule requiring all manufacturers that make critical drugs to report to the FDA any interruptions or delays in the manufacturing process.

The results: Potential shortages of 19 drugs were avoided, including the drugs manufactured by a single pharmaceutical firm, according to a fact sheet from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The FDA is in the process of building a new database to track drug shortages.

Oxal's last source no longer depends on Oxal, which remains in short supply. She has switched to a new cancer-fighting drug, Eribulin, which is readily available. "I'm still pissed off, but I'm doing OK," she says. "I'm still told and applied by what's going on in the drug industry in general. I've always felt that way about them, but it's now confirmed all my worst fears about Big Pharma."

—E.P.

ENVIRONMENT

Lowell Mountain Becomes Battleground in Vermont's Industrial Wind Wars

OCT 19 In 2010, Green Mountain Power proposed building a 25-turbine wind farm on Lowell Mountain. GMP said the electric Lowell residents there out of fear of their safety for the jobs. With such support, GMP would build a 25-turbine wind farm on Lowell Mountain. GMP said the electric Lowell residents there out of fear of their safety for the jobs. With such support, GMP would build a 25-turbine wind farm on Lowell Mountain. GMP said the electric Lowell residents there out of fear of their safety for the jobs. With such support, GMP would build a 25-turbine wind farm on Lowell Mountain.



Protesters camped on the Lowell Mountain property near the Lowell Mountain.

UPDATE: The construction work on Lowell Mountain has been on the ground of Vermont's wind energy development debate. Local environmental groups don't see eye to eye on it.

In early December, the Green Mountain

Mountain protesters and a group of 100 were arrested for trespassing. Several days later, 18 more protesters blocked work crews, but departed before more arrests could be made. The two-hour work stoppage cost "thousands of

dollars," according to GMP spokesperson David Johnson. She claims the protesters are creating a safety risk for themselves, the 200 workers on site and area townspeople, whose police are being called away to deal with the demonstration.

But industrial wind opponents are determined to call attention to what they see as a great threat: destroying the environment to slow global warming.

Apparently, their message has reached Vermont's administration. Department of Public Service Commissioner Lee Miller told Vermont Public Radio that it's "sensitive" to the concerns of some Northeast Kingdom residents and suggested that future wind development in Vermont's mountains may not be appropriate.

Anthony Smith, with Vermonters for a Clean Environment, was more succinct: "Wind developers are the closest thing to God that there is."

—E.P.



Left: David

POLITICS

Burlington's Proposed New Skatopark Has Become a Political Foothill

NOV 02 Planning for a new skatepark on the Burlington Waterfront has taken on all the elements of a classic Burlington development battle. Seven days after the November 8. Burlington's financial and political arguments against it for a lawsuit — Why 42 may residents — to the changes to the project, which is supposed to get underway this spring. Skaters have responded by continuing their fundraising efforts and attempting to reassure approved neighbors who say they were not properly consulted about the project.

UPDATE: The fight has moved to the Burlington City Council, which recently urged Mayor Bob Kiss to seek funding other than the \$300,000 allocated from the Penny for Parks fund. Critics contend that money from this reserve — which is supported by a dedicated tax — would be better spent on repairs and maintenance at existing park facilities. Some condemn the planning process, as well. "The skatepark park acts as a example of lack of transparency," suggests New North End activist Len Tishman, comparing the project's planning process to the closed-door financial maneuverings for Burlington Telecom.

Kiss reacted to the council's move by refusing to endorse the resolution calling for consideration of a new skatepark funding source. That course of action "makes no sense," Kiss wrote in a message to councilors, arguing, "there is no more appropriate source of city funding" for the skate facility than Penny for Parks.

A \$6 billion federal package for waterfront redevelopment is expected to cover most of the project's costs, which could run as high as \$900,000. If it gets built just north of the Mount Pleasant, the proposed park will be the largest in New England and a draw for skaters throughout the region.

Some critics suggest the waterfront is the wrong location for such a project. Activist Tim Jarvis, for one, says he expects "the majority of taxpayers would want to preserve the green space on the waterfront and use the skatepark built in a more secluded area." Many would also question why Burlington needs to have the biggest and most expensive skatepark in New England," Jarvis adds.

— K J K

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO... P.33

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2011updates

Whatever Happened to...?



POLITICS

Organizers Enlist 'Occupy' Isn't Over

NOV 09 Seven days was the first local media outlet to report that Burlington's Occupy City Hall Park protest was having problems accommodating some of the homeless men who had joined the encampment. The next day one of those men shared his story with himself inside a tent. The police closed the occupied portion of the park, which they had designated as a no-camp zone. The following day, a group of about 100 people threatened to become a riot — until Mayor Bob Kiss stopped in to make peace. Capital and the threat of winter does even equal the end of Occupy?

UPDATE: Definitely not, the movement's members insist. Occupy Burlington has continued to assemble and march while organizing for holiday markets in City Hall Park. Protesters have been taking part in "listening sessions" related to Vermont's universal health care law. A demo in support of the single-payer plan is scheduled for the Statehouse on January 3, the legislature's opening day.

More than 30 working groups, each infused with the energy of youth, are planning various initiatives, says organizer Brad Hartley. He won't reveal what one of them might involve. But Hartley does declare, "The loss of the park is not permanent."

At Sunday-afternoon general assemblies, open to everyone, Occupy's intervention in the city's seasonal race has been posed as a possibility. Hearing-focused protests are also being planned, notes activist Patrick Monaghan. He suggests they could involve occupation of a firewood shed, or bus taking place in Brooklyn.

Hartley is thus a New Year's prediction, "We're going to experience a convergence of environmental and social justice movements in 2012."

— K. J. K.

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7 to Watch in 2012

politics

Montpelier power brokers, policy makers and opinion shapers to keep your eye on next year

BY ANDY BROWN A&J

Just a few short days, Montpelier will be crawling with politicians. The start of the legislative session heralds a crush of lawmakers, lobbyists, advocates and citizens who descend on Vermont's capital city and spend the next five months jockeying for position.

All eyes will be on a trio of Democratic state lawmakers who gets data — or doesn't — before the session ends and campaign season begins. Gov. Peter Shumlin, House Speaker Skip Stinchcomb and Senate President Pro Tem John Campbell. On the Republican side, House Minority Leader Don Turner will guide the GOP banner in its battle — and into the full election campaign.

All these guys get a lot of ink. But who else is worth watching? With hundreds of characters pushing agendas in committee rooms, at defense tables and on barstools after hours, separating the power players from the pip squeaks can be tricky.

Steven Dwyer asked several political observers to nominate some less obvious candidates, and we chose in a few of our own suggestions. Warning: This list is by no means comprehensive, and we've sure done more will emerge as we stride in the months ahead. But each of the following seven is poised to do something big this year. Whether they prove worthy of our collective gaze remains to be seen.

Sen. Randy Broek (R-Franklin)

Earlier this month, Republican state Sen. Randy Broek stepped forward to announce his candidacy for governor in 2012 — but

he said he can't go because he won't be happy until the legislative session wraps up in May. While he may not make campaign cash or hire staff before spring, everything Broek does in the next six weeks will be viewed through a political lens — and with heightened scrutiny that could boost or sink his



electoral prospects. A retired executive at Fidelity Investments, Broek served as state auditor from 2005 to 2007 before winning a Senate seat in 2008. In making his own assessment, Broek proclaimed that Shumlin's health care and energy policies are "both a trap assumption and wishful thinking centered over a foundation of quackery." That's a lot of metaphors. As a candidate, Broek will be forced to elaborate on those shortcomings in the months ahead. As a senator who sits on committees with jurisdiction over taxes and energy, he'll be expected to do something to fix them.

Bruce Lisman

You may or may not see Bruce Lisman around the capital this year, but he'll be at work nonetheless. The former Wall Street executive made a splash in November when he took a gathering of the Associated Industries of Vermont that state government should put the brakes on health care and renewable energy — two of Shumlin's signature priorities — to focus exclusively on state recovery. Some speculated that Lisman, a native Vermonter who came home to reform, was

giving up to run for office against Shumlin, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders or someone else. Instead, he has had Campaign for Vermont to



unite Vermonters of all political stripes around "economic security, better job opportunities and growing prosperity for Vermonters of every generation." Lisman, named in business circles as a sort of chief spokesman, has cited general goals of government as accountability and transparency, but otherwise has given few clues about his group's agenda. Campaign for Vermont has already sent four separate radio ads out, at the governor's invitation, and with Shumlin at his top table. Campaign for Vermont bills itself as nonpartisan, but it counts several high-ranking GOP donors among

its founding partners, including Walt Freed and Angelo Pataffiglio. Lisman himself has donated to Democrats and Republicans, but in 2010 contributed \$10,000 to the Vermont Republican Federal Elections Committee.

Todd Bailey

Todd Bailey has been a fixture at the Statehouse for years — first as executive director of the Vermont League of Conservation Voters and now as a lobbyist for the Ben-Inhony firm K&B Partners. Come January, Bailey will take on a new role as treasurer of a new "Super PAC" named Americans for a Better Tomorrow. Today, part of a new branch of K&B Campaigns. The PAC name is a reference to Stephen Colbert's Super PAC Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow, but the purpose is dead serious. It may have



corporate, union and individual for federal election campaigns. Hey, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, right?

Anya Rader Wallack

Shumlin is making a lot of political capital on his goal of making Vermont the first state to enact a universal, single-payer health care system. And he's looking to one person in particular to navigate the policy and politics required to get the job done. Post-election, Shumlin named Anya Rader Wallack his special assistant in charge of health care reform. This September, he appointed her chair of the five-member Green Mountain Care Board, the panel designing the single-payer system. Health care is a political minefield

and attempts at change have rarely won many a political battle. Republican candidate Randy Broek is already taking notes on Shumlin's health care plan — he called it "the dumbest way to



SOME SPECULATED THAT LISMAN WAS GEARING UP TO RUN FOR OFFICE AGAINST SHUMLIN, U.S. SEN. BERNIE SANDERS OR SOMEONE ELSE. Instead, he launched "campaign for Vermont."

the Vermont-based political action committee will advocate for progressive tax policies, cleaner energy, economic security and a cut in tax bargaining rights for unions — a bonfire lit by energy from the Obama movement into fundraising for progressive causes. Bailey's position in time is Bob Stinson, a former lawmaker and longtime anti-nuclear lobbyist. What makes the PAC super? Under the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United ruling, Super PACs — officially known as "independent expenditure only committees" — can raise and spend unlimited sums of cash from

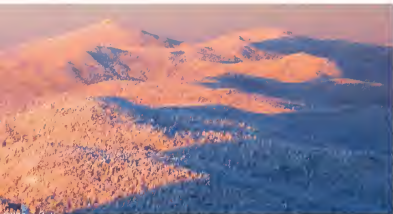
individuals or on Vermont Public Radio on December 13 — suggesting the issue could take center stage in the 2012 gubernatorial race. Rader Wallack certainly has the policy chops for health reform. She was president of Arrowhead Health Analytics, a health care policy consulting firm, and served as executive director of the data analysis nonprofit Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care Inc. And she's a veteran of past health care battles. She worked for then First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in the 1990s and later for former Vermont governor Howard Dean. The good news for Rader

The Remains of the Day

Sunset brings a little magic to the French Mountains

By Brian Jones





With the short days of winter upon us, getting to the mountains after work often means embracing the sunset hour. Vermont's many peaks and ridges are seldom more

OUTDOORS

than a 30- or 35-minute descent to the talus and safety of the valleys. That makes it possible for well-prepared skiers to hang up high even after the sun has set, as the mountain's peak is in the glow of the very last rays of light.

"The snow is nice, too, but it means climbing the mountain in the dark," says Forrest Twombly, 35, a builder from Randolph. He skis right from his home whenever he has a few hours to spare. As for the manner in which, "There's really no better way to wrap up the day," Twombly says.

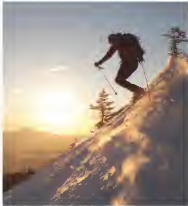
It's a very special time on a mountain top, he suggests. There's a feeling of solitude. Light and color dance across the landscape. And though the temperature is dropping, the moon is likely rising and the wind is often calm.

When venturing out late in the day,

of course, it's essential to be prepared: Bring headlamps in your packs, extra layers of clothing, first-aid supplies, some food and a means of making hot drinks. Light is dim on the descent, but the challenge of sliding home in the half light of dusk sharpens the senses. One's heart. Towering trees creak. Sharp branches require quick reflexes.

The challenge Of Skiing Home in The half light T OF DUSK SHARPENS THE SENSES

"Sunset skiing is not simply about the light at the end of the day—it is about a host of things driving the experience," suggests Dan Smith of Stowe. The 32-year-old says he rarely turns down a chance to ski in the late afternoon. "The woods are a little quieter, the shadows a little longer," Smith muses. "Those things add a little more depth to the space between the trees." ☺



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Name Game 2011

What's in a name? This year, plenty of illegal, ironic and inappropriate behavior

BY KEN PICARD

For those of us who keep track of apocryms — by definition, people whose names match their professions, pursuits or personal proclivities — 2011 was a banner year like none in recent memory.

This year in the news, we saw photos and videotapes of a New York City police inspector named **Tony Bologna**, who pepper-sprayed a group of women at an Occupy Wall Street demonstration.

WORDS

for an apparent reason.

We also learned of a gang of rogue Assiah men who terrorized the Pennsylvania countryside, chopping off the heads and hair of their fellow Assiah folk. Four of the seven victims' wedding barbets all belong to the same family: the **Matties**.

However, the hands-down "winner" of the 2011 Apocrym of the Year Award goes to the man who, almost overnight, went from being a respected Democratic congressman from New York's Ninth Congressional District to the punch line of countless late-night comedy acts: **Anthony D. Weiner**.



In June, Weiner admitted to sending inappropriate photos of his junk to his women over three years via email and Twitter. The scandal, dubbed "Weinergate" led to the congressman's resignation.

This year's news also produced a few apocryms involving men who behaved badly. They include **Michael Childs**, the 49-year-old man from Escardale, Ala., who was sentenced to 30 years in prison for his involvement in a global child-pornography ring. Childs can only pray he is assigned to a girls cell.

Then there was **Quinn Hanson**, the auto-diagnosed U.S. Navy captain who was relieved of his command of the USS *Essex* after he created a series of lewd and homophobic videos that aired on the ship's closed-circuit television on Saturday nights. Hanson's explanation: It was all harmless fun to boost crew morale. Apparently, his jokes and simulated mental exams are what got him in on an aircraft carrier since the sailors live of the on-board movie theater and bowling alley.

Not all of the apocryms that hit the radar this year were of the scolded variety. Others include:

Scott Borg: international cyber-security expert.

James Carroll: a freelance writer who specializes in medical first-responder communications issues.

Carl Coker: Island Ford man arrested by the Vermont State Police in November and charged with drug manufacturing.

Alex Confort: author of *The New Day of Sex*.

Patti Cook: recipe developer for *Eating Well* magazine.

Steve Cook and **Erica Housheager**: public commissioner and director of communications, respectively, for the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing.

Linda Cruise: communications and special projects coordinator for the Vermont Institute on the Caribbean.

Roli Daguerre: Colchester refrigerator repairman.

Rosemary Glabbe: a Vermont herbalist and gardener.

Jennifer Green: the city of Burlington's environmental specialist.

Lucy Harding: Vermont Fish and Wildlife law-enforcement assistant.

Yan-Ran Lee: a runner in the 2011 Burlington City Marathon.

Patrick Lerner: produce manager at the Peace Chopper in Essex.

Gregory Payne: founder and president of Payne Emergency Medical Services, a Burlington ambulance company that went out of business in February.

Larry Plawent: founder of the Vermont Soap Company, which produces organic and hypoallergenic products that also smell nice.

Andrew Snow: director of services at Indian Valley old resort.

Paula Traynor: In 2010, she weighed about 300 pounds. This year, Traynor was down to 167 pounds and ran half the Burlington City Marathon.

Shawn R. Venable: a Wilmington, Vt., man accused of burglarizing 14 local houses between November 16 and December 15, usually by smothering their windows with a tea towel.

Debra Washington: FEMA worker.

Andy Watts: chair of Essex Energy Committee.

Rick Wood: tree specialist with Hiram's Arborists ☺

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Countdown Towns

A First Night guide to ringing in the new year

BY CAROLYN FOX

Boy, if over a year came with baggage. As 2012, the end year of the Millennium Long Count calendar, is rife with doomsday predictions—and, though Mayans and modern scientists alike have largely dispelled these as myths, it's still pretty heavy stuff to weigh on your mind this New Year's Eve. We'd rather ask scribe to British rapper Jay Sean's more festive forecast in "2012 (It Ain't the End)": "We gonna party like it's 2012... It ain't the end of the world." Whatever the coming year brings, three First Night celebrations around the state make sure we ring it in right.

Buy a ticket!—it's your ticket to music, theater, dancing and fireworks. Burlington and Montpelier festivals kick up at noon. St. Johnsbury joins the club at 4 p.m.

As always, the Queen City pulls out all stops in its impressive 12-hour celebration. Comic offerings are on the incline this year, with two helpings of funny at the Flynn—and you'll want to hit up at least a few of the 15-plus venues for gaggle Circus Smirkus, the Scarside Rhythm Boys, the House of Lahey and many more. "A big draw of course is the fireworks, and you can get a double dose at 6 p.m. and midnight."

"A Capital City Fingers & Fingers for the second year in favor of a lantern launch. At 5:30 p.m., magical, biodegradable Kongming lanterns light up the night, clipping a day of luck, planning, or skating supersticy... you name it. Everything over and done with by 10:30 p.m. for those who want to hit up another party—or maybe just hit the hay."

Over in the Northeast Kingdom, St. Johnsbury offers the best of both worlds: dancing/Queen performers play with fire before helping revelers send sky lanterns into the night at 8:15 p.m. Traditional midnight pyrotechnics wrap up a Me soah sing-along, belly dancing and the always-popular planetarium shows.

So much to do, and only one night to do it! Read on for some of the highlights. Neighboring towns also offer their own take on New Year's Eve, so the sidebar for a roundup of dance parties and parties.

It's been a good run, 2011. Now cheers to the new year!

HOLIDAYS

BURLINGTON

Saturday, December 31, 6 p.m. to midnight, at various downtown locations. \$5-27 ticket. Free for kids under 2; some shows require additional \$4 tickets. Info: 802-400-5, firstnightburlington.com

Beginner's Luck

Swing by Church Street at midnight to ring in the New Year's Eve and it may prove to be more straightforward than New Year. Floating above the crowds are music, vintage, and vintage are more suspenseful than fireworks. The mythical creatures, symbols of luck, Chinese folktales, are said to give bad omens the hour. Crafted as part by children from area schools and housed along its poles, each installation, glowing being a celebration as they down the market place in a colorful celebration of community and new beginnings.

Dancing Dragons Parade

5 to 8:30 p.m. at Church Street Marketplace

If you like the try: Parade of Lights, Lantern Procession & Dance Party.

8 to 10:30 p.m. at City Hall Plaza. First Night Montpelier

Goodbye Girl

Few words boom between Agnieszka's two First Night performances, but the scene set by this Burlington songstress is the defining element. "Agnieszka's voice is the definition of 'transparency,'" wrote *Rolling Stone* magazine, and yet her style—a blend of folk, Americana and country—isn't mindless as it seems. As one of the region's top songwriters, she's toured with Mike Devlin of Phish, collaborated with Lyle Lovett and Sheryl Crow, and currently fronts popular local folk-rock band the Acoustic Rhythms Project. Might some of those fans be in the crowd for the 2011 season's last night?



Agnieszka & Friends

Agnieszka & Friends

5 to 5:45 p.m. at FlynnSpace. 7 to 7:40 p.m. at College Street Congregational Church

If you like this, try: Anna Mitchell. 5 to 5:40

p.m. at First Congregational Church Sanctuary. First Night Burlington. 5 and 11 p.m. at Fuller Hall. St. Johnsbury Academy. First Night St. Johnsbury

MORE MIDNIGHT MADNESS ... SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve Fireworks & Teatime Parade 4 to 10 p.m. at Babes Valley Road. Free. Info: 877-835-0856. babesvalley.com

New Year's Eve Knights of Columbus Party 6:30 p.m. at Knights of Columbus in St. Albans. \$45. pryorje@jeff.com. 309-1452

New Year's Eve Lullaby Dance 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at North End Studios Art Building. \$6 to \$15. 324-351 or 324-7754. areyouentertainment.com

New Year's Eve Parade 8 p.m. at Big Brothers Theater. 5 to 10 p.m. at Info: 404-8684. bigbrothers-theater.org

New Year's Eve Party & Fireworks 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the International Room. Jay Peak Resort, Vermont. pryorje@jeff.com. 309-1452

New Year's Eve With the Horse Traders 8 p.m. at Town Hall Theater in Montpelier. \$15. Info: 382-6222. townhalltheater.org

Reckon! New Year's Eve 7 p.m. at Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in South Burlington. \$52.25. pryorje@jeff.com. 309-1452

A Wicked Smart New Year's 6:00 p.m. at Tamarack Golf. Burke Mountain Ski Resort. \$60. make reservations by 12:01 and up. Teatime Parade. 8:30 p.m. at Sheraton Base Lodge. Free. Info: 326-7380. skibuck.com



Sharon Rogers Photo

MONTPELIER

Saturday, December 21, noon to 10:30 p.m., at the first downtown location 500 W. Water St., 375-4342 or 202-9564 montpelier.org/firstnight

Down the Road

From the greenroom doorway to alleged piousness shenanigans, 2012 is also going up to be quite a ride. Our home takes between three and four years to write songs that make the open road. As Hotels & Highways, from "Silly" Sunday French Theatre and Vermont native Lou Puccillo write aspects of ideas and put into whimsical folk songs about going with the flow. "Open the door/ whenever it stops, I'm going" begins "Down the Road." That song was one of 30 winners and recorded at a short lake-side retreat, a compilation of it's also grown" track that turned into the first album, *Lost River*. Does your driver know what the future will bring?



Hotels & Highways

8 p.m. at the Unitarian Church

If you like this, try: *Joshua Puccillo Band* 8 to 10:40 p.m. at Burlington City Hall Auditorium, First Night Burlington



House of Lights

ST. JOHNSBURY

Saturday, December 21, 4 p.m. to midnight at various downtown locations. \$10-15 ticket; free for preschoolers. Info, 248-2500, firstnight.org

Up, Up and Away

Next time it's all about looking up. From looking up to the stars in the coming months to simply creating your own new star the fireworks. The pop-up of the first of the National Maritime Theatre, however, have their hands firmly being downed — to use the right line, that is. The operators of this two-tone UNIMA is taking a new step. Founded in 1962, play the role of puppet master, carrier, sculptor, painter and costume in order to produce stunning and striking story adaptations. In their first visit to St. J., they'll go there and beyond by featuring select masterpieces in vignettes of their most popular performances.



National Maritime Theatre

National Maritime Theatre 4 p.m. 8 p.m. 7 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the Charles Adams House Center for the Arts, St. Johnsbury Academy

If you like this, try: *No Strings Maricetta Company* 1 p.m. 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. at Union School Gym First Night Montpelier



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Nearly every day, sometimes several times a day, I meet readers who want to know my favorite restaurants in Burlington. So most of my three posts at Seven Days, this was a tough question. Bluebird Tavern was obvious — though, before it moved to St. Paul Street from Riverside Avenue this month, it really felt more like a Winoski drinking spot. At Truonza Delia, the gnocchi with bear is a treat, but outside my everyday badrep.

More often than not, I preferred to seek my pearls outside the Queen City. Then, this year, something magical happened. Great whites found I really came to Charleston.

**THIS YEAR, SOMETHING
MAGICAL HAPPENED.
GREAT ETHNIC FOOD FINALLY
CAME TO BURLINGTON.**

Last summer, **Theresa splitting** my work lunch by taking a break taken at Pura's Place on North Winickie Avenue and Ken Sai Japanese Restaurant on Lake Street in recent weeks, I've been grabbing lunch or even more often, owing to the debut of Pura on Main Street, with its creative, brilliantly crafted sandwiches and soups that change daily. I can't help but thank on star* for diligently passing the lunch menu early each day. Although deciding is a burden when you're confronted with a sandwich containing chicken-three musashis, bacon, apple and cherry stringing on the same day as a sandwich with ricotta, beets and fig-halibut slices.

With any luck, Boston will stick around for a long time so we can try them all. For now, though, the Persian and Japanese spots share my annual pick for best new restaurant of the year.

In tribute, here are snippets of my reviews of both, with some updates.

Best Bites of 2011

Two new ethnic eateries were the stars of the Burlington dining scene this year.

DEW ALICE LEVITT



FARAH'S PLACE

Since Funzi's Place opened quietly and significantly in Burlington, I just haven't been able to stay away. And it's not just me. One of my former Dupa colleagues put the news on the n. ce bridge while I was on vacation. A good friend now seems to be huge weekly Thursday b* at, complete with Middle Eastern music by local band Locust. He says the fun temporarily alleviates his tennis elbow. I am not making this up.

Across the board, everything I've eaten there has been delicious, though, admittedly, each dish tastes slightly different from what I eat. One dish that is always on the list is the fish cake. Available as a frequent special, this bowl of soft red-colored bean curd (tofu) is filled with a creamy combination of chicken, yogurt and eggs. The topped mussels and soft noodles make it something like a giant seafood omelette of noodles, it's topped with dried herbaceous, close to mushrooms. A salad of fresh greens, lightly dressed in tangy yogurt sauce, adds color, but who are we kidding? It's all about the fish cake.

Katfish, if it was split pea and beef meatballs, are also an interesting wonder, with a spicy tomato sauce and a side of bread for dipping. Best of all, the soft, juicy and delicious steamed buns are so large. I got two meals from the \$7 order.

Speaking of the £4.95 bread that Marsh serves, made of A Taste of Europe in Colchester, you would be remiss not to try it with the *maraghenese*, or eggplant dip. A small portion of both (enough for an appetizer for two) is \$3. Somewhat like a comfort food

Kebab dominates the menu at Pasha's.

Place. They're available as platters of tucked into those same lovely loaves of bread, and, either way, the meats are shockingly fresh. That's not a surprise, since local products are common on this menu. Even the lamb comes from Woodlark Ranch Farms in Marinville.

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MORE 2011 SUPERLATIVES

Hottest restaurant trend: Top up-dining opportunities, such as Barrio's fallowing, now discontinued build Center Club and Money Love Co.'s many family experiences in Burlington and Flanders.

The least liked fall fare: Pumpkin. Despite a slew of recipes, Vermonters just were disappointed with the options.

The Vermont family brought up least: A vast gamut of cuisine in the form of family traditions and adult vintages. Family seemed to call for it, as such restaurant is an Avenue of the Food Culinary Branch & Food Fasting and the North Home House Inn & Restaurant.

Outmost apartment close into Life Café in Rutland: First the September life right spot and daily open!

Hottest business to start: A delivery. The more cooking the better, the better.

Hottest business: Tropical Storm here, which moved many of restaurants throughout the state some permanently.

Hottest sticker: Sudden changes in Snow, not all of them. Several Restaurants & Brewery and Sardinia Cakes Lulus.



The kushikabli are unaccountably juicy sausage lengths of ground chicken, lamb or beef. Lightly spiced with tiny flecks of red pepper throughout, they have a flavor so complex that they need nothing but a squeeze of lemon to dole them.

However, the greatest kushikabli of all has got to be the boneless chicken. Just be sure to ask how long it's been marinating when you order. Half a day isn't enough. This moist, flavorful poultry is at the peak of its powers after about three days.

The yogurt-based marinade does something for me that nothing else in Vermont has. It takes me back to my favorite Indian restaurants when I was growing up around New York. The tangy, aromatic flavors are strong but comforting and as big as Texas — or rather, to the whole Middle East. The chicken kushikabli side of saffron rice benefits from an accompanying charred tomato. Cut it up and combine the two for a great treat.

But, whatever you do, go to Fushiki. Chances are it'll be there.

SAN SAI JAPANESE RESTAURANT

San Sai could hardly have a better home, the high-ceilinged space on the Burlington waterfront that was previously occupied (in succession) by Kabeets, O & Tans. Lake views are perfectly suited to the feisty menu, supplied partly by local distributor Wood

Nevada Fish. But the location's relative obscurity can leave the restaurant lamentably quiet, especially at lunchtime. Diners don't know what they're missing.

The interior of San Sai is as fresh as the food in the palate. A large, nautical-themed example of Japanese art is the above behind the host stand, a giant vase holds brightly colored flowers, brought down to earth by a pace of dishwash. Tapestries decorated with Japanese characters hang from the ceiling. On the walls above the metal tables, a series of some e-ink-and-wood paintings depicts hungry cranes with their heads raised for a snack. There's even artwork in the papers that hold the chopsticks, each printed with a sumo-e fisher for extra.

If you attention to detail, you'll be well for the food, so does the quality menu. The chef-owners are American Chris Russo and his mentor, 35-year culinary veteran Katsunori Mura. They arrived in Vermont fresh from closing Traill, a sushi spot on the Upper East Side of

Manhattan that *New York* magazine's website rated 9 out of 10. At San Sai, sushi and sashimi options exemplify the creative tastes available at top spots in New York, and they feature steaks and flavored salsas not previously seen in Vermont.

When I visited for my review, I tried a particularly interesting creation called Hawaiian sushi, featuring sushi rolls, noodles and tempura. The unique menu was filled with sushi, noodles and steaks of various. The simple pasta overhang was dipped in tempura, then fried until cloud-like formation that floated above the sushi roll. Slices of ground (one of the wild sides, or "sai sai") that lead the restaurant is named surrounded the sushi, and the whole thing sat in a light pool of sesame-based sauce. The dish was truly a stunner, but only a warm-up for the dinner I prepared.

Like many of its upscale counterparts, San Sai offers an omakase, or chef's-choice option. The diner sets the price, but lives there the folks in the



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food

Best Bites of 2011

kitchen role. One key difference from metropolitan restaurants was that we were able to set the price at a relatively uniform \$12 to \$13 per person.

The meal began with three small plates. A cube of pork belly was bound to creamy sofrito in a sweet miso-and-sage sauce. A nugget of homemade tofu was stuffed with mushrooms and served with ginger sauce. Perhaps

rice and dandelion with a few sandwiches of cucumber. Tuna made appearances in a pleasantly cheesy roll topped with sea urchin and in a nigiri-style morsel of coarsely chopped tarragon, mixed with brussels sprouts pickled in cider.

The show-biz flourish on the plate was the volcano molé, another dish that has since become one of my dietary staples. The sample inside-one rolls were filled



Chris Evans

most dishes were a large round of tender dandelion, and those toasty French breads for rubens, all bathed in sweet miso and poppy seeds. I had never seen anything quite like this dish before, but it felt familiar, like comfort food from another planet.

Roasted-egg-and-cucumber salad followed. The honey fish was marinated and tender inside, with crisp, airy skin to rival pork ribs. Cucumbers provided a bright foil, along with a sweet and slightly tangy dressing.

If the meal had ended there, we would have left thinking we'd get our money's worth. However, six more courses followed. First came a cylinder of salmon tartare in carrot sauce, covered in its own silky — but not fatty — rice-celery skin.

Then there was the umi-dashi roll, which has since become a weekly must-have for me. For those who balk at soft shells, the leaf can be a revelation. Its inner flavor encompasses elements of lemon, mint and sage. Wrapped around sautéed pickled plums and a piece of rice, yamato, it packed a wallop and left me salivating even after I'd eaten all the rice-and-onion-wrapped shells.

The roll provided an apt palate cleanser for what turned out to be the main event: a large plate filled with a veritable pantheon of aquatic delights. The corn-oiled salmon returned, this time served on a bed of cucumber. So did the loach, packed two rows over a layer of

with roasty chunks of tuna, lobed liberally with rich, spicy carpaccio and piled into a gyron. A shower of tempura crumbs coated the outside. On top, a lone few of loach, salmon and fried strands of sweet potato added crunch, poppy texture and salty sweetness. We were so full, we almost refused the final course of green tea ice cream. The soft texture was pleasant, but the flavor was somewhat artificial.

Finally, in classic sushi-master garb, inside the rounds of tables at each of my meals. This modesty, friendliness and knowledge have made it a pleasure to talk with him about the fishes he and his master concocted.

San Sai has located Vermont Japanese cuisine. Each meal I've enjoyed there has been an adventure, full of surprises. But more than just an eating spot, unless they have Miso and Ramen's mastery, San Sai will continue to stand alone. **B**

F Flamingo Place 143 North Woodstock Avenue, Burlington 540-2063
Davidsonville.com/best-bites-2011

San Sai Japanese Restaurant 143 Lake Street, Burlington 540-6177

More food after the classified section. PAGE 45

Food Firsts, and Sometimes Seconds

Dishes, drinks and trends that left their mark on a newcomer

BY CORIN HIRSCH

Only 50-odd miles from the Upper Valley to Burlington, but for me, taking a job in Chittenden County was akin to stepping through the looking glass. Last winter, I packed up my possessions and headed north to start my new gig as a food writer for *Seven Days*. TV verities about food culture back in the UV, but this was new territory and, as I found out, markedly different. I haven't yet been able to put my finger on the source of the distinction. The restaurants here are more curious, the willingness to engage in discussion of food, agriculture and related policy more widespread, but there's something else.

This entire year felt like a journey through another country—disorienting, improvising and sometimes bumpy—in which more than a few meals, trends and places stood out. Here's a hodgepodge annotated list of the foods, fashions, people and trends that left a mark on this (Keweenaw) stranger.

Small plates I've returned for more than once:

Spring: Crunchy tofu cakes in lemon-caper emulsion, the Bearded Frog, Shelburne

Summer: Crab and avocado Napoleons, Sonoma Station, Richmond; sautéed pork belly with watermelon, Anacost at the Essex Culinary Resort & Spa, Essex

Fall: Hot oysters, Blackbird Tavern, Burlington

Winter: Klompstede, Des Borchs, Burlington

I'm a dedicated small-plate surfer. I usually find them more creative or dignified than main dishes, and there are few fits the way *Ten*, *Eden* and *Small Bites*, like a perpetually hungry quiver. Some small plates remind, in their components, of



Oyster at Blackbird Tavern



At just food it

with the season—or at least be. So I revisit my favorites while they're still around.

In Shelburne, I learned that chef Andrea Cossentino commands soy with the same skill as she does fish. She gently fries tofu cakes in panko until crispy, then nestles them in a pool of tangy but lighter-than-air lemon-caper emulsion. I hope the dish comes around again this spring.

One moonstruck summer night, I happened into Richmond's Sonoma Station and met the crab and avocado Napoleons, a Jiggs-like tower of

crackling wonton skins, creamy nutty avocado, and cool, fluffy crab divided with an herbaceous and zesty cilantro sauce. It's a satisfying, summery mashup of textures.

Fresh, sweet watermelon and voluptuous pork belly together on the same plate are just one of the improbable wonders that grace the tables at Anacost, the experimental small-plate haven in Essex.

Oysters come into their prime in fall, and I was thrilled when Blackbird Tavern moved to St. Paul Street, bringing new brother devotees. While I love me some oysters on the half shell, the kitchen's hot system are a hands-off—scented and topped with a mouth-filling seaweed milk, squatty pho trout rose and a hint of maple sugar.

Des Borchs' cool garden may be one of the best places to hang out in summer. Come winter, the restaurant is the place to hunker up on wurst, rouladen and, best of all, klompstede, a rich, cheesy tangle of noodles blended with slightly caramelized onions and topped with piquant chili and parsley. Chef-owner Nick Karelakis was generous enough to share his recipe, which I ran on our staff blog. *Blurt*, in the fall.

Big plate (and place) I won't soon forget:

Churrasco a la parrilla, Santos Cocina Latina, Rowe

I pass by the now-vacant Santos often, and wish I had visited more than once. That one night I did—during Restaurant Week—chef Miguel Garcia's grilled skirt steak was so perfect, earthy and moist, with an addictive, smoky, roasted-tomato chimichurri sauce painted across the top.

PHOTOS BY JEFFREY

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food

Little River Red — pungent smoked trout and snap, fresh suprema rolled in sushi rice and again in leathery dill — is popular for a reason.

And an even better pairing: Local porters, trout and oysters, Three Penny Taproom, Montpelier

On Saturdays, the crew here serves shimmering raw oysters fresh from the docks in Massachusetts, with a cognacette sauce that sparks their flavors to life. The ever-changing beers with which to wash them down include such quiffs as Hill Farmstead Everett Porter and Lawson's First Division Maple Imperial Stout. It's like a little bit of Galway in landlocked Vermont.

Speaking of beer, the liveliest agricultural trend:

Hops revival

Once I saw one hop plant, I began seeing them everywhere: sprouting up posts and along roadsides and the sides of buildings, dripping with aromatic cones. There was a time, in fact, when the whole of the Vermont landscape was covered in hops. One day soon, I hope — and so do local brewers — state growers will reach a critical mass and begin rivalling producers on the West Coast.

Least obvious place to find amazing bread combined with a kick-ass wine selection:

Red Hen Baking Company, Middlesex

For me, Red Hen Baking Company was love at first sight: a welcoming cove just off the highway I drive regularly, where I could park with my laptop and feast on scones, tea, warm bread and hearty soups. Only after a few visits did I realize it also harbors a just yet eclectic wine selection. Whoever curates this has a head for good grapes and unusual varietals: Zweigelt, Marzemino and local white galls.

... And, with due props to Red Hen, the best bread epiphany:

Elmore Mountain Bread Seven Grain, Elmore

I tripped apart my first seven loaf of this

in the car, devouring it like a savage. I made a pilgrimage to Elmore Mountain to see how it's made. I couldn't tell you the store shelf where it arrives every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

I also keep going to Burlington's City Market on Wednesdays in hopes of grabbing one of Gerard Robard's famous loaves, but I have yet to succeed. So, for now, Elmore Mountain is my holy grail.



Best place I haven't been yet, though everyone else talks about it:

Ariel's Restaurant, Brookfield

I've called here a few times to talk with Lee Doherty or Richard Took for stories. I've dined over their menus. I've learned to others' gosh about unforgettable meals and experiences. And I have yet to make it down to Brookfield.

Most unexpected place to make it onto this list:

Harrison's Restaurant and Bar, Stowe

Before I first crossed the threshold here, I figured Harrison's would be a nondescript place to grab a burger or wings or a plate of something hearty. Wrong. There's a reason this spot is always busy, even when Stowe's Main Street is deserted. It's a burrow into which you can descend and feel immediately at home. The heat, the fire is well rendered, and the chef pays attention to detail — crafting a spruce dip made with mushrooms and a hint of heat, for instance, or braised short ribs on a char-broiled blackberry chipotle barbecue sauce that tastes like midnight. The glasses of wine are gorgeous, too. It's the essence of an unpretentious neighborhood American bistro. ☺

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JAN.07 | MUSIC

CHRIS SMITH/REUTERS

Over the Moon

With sparkling snow crunching pleasantly beneath their feet and the moon in the night sky above, no discerning types won't know whether to look up or down at North Branch Nature Center's Full Moon Snowshoe Hike. It's not a bad problem to have. Determined by the lunar phase, these guided monthly treks — or hikes, if snow doesn't show — take adults into the folds of the 28-acre nature preserve, and sometimes forays proceed into Hubbard Park and North Branch Park. Stargazing and birded owl sightings add to the celestial celebration — as does a hot chocolate & milk, served in a heated tent.

FULL MOON SNOWSHOE HIKE

Friday, January 6, 5 to 8:30 p.m. at North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier. \$5-8 (young children accompanied), snowshoes and hot chocolate provided. Info: 225-8236, northbranchnaturecenter.org



JAN.06 | OUTDOORS

Time After Time

You know you're a seasoned songsmith when you record an album in just three days, and either build it as the best yet of your career — which is the case with Chris Smither's 2004 release *Time Remains Still*. And the songman — an American blues rocker several times the early '70s — is still going strong, with both a new album and an EP out in 2005. The speedy songwriting contrasts with his live concerts, which are marked by unbarred and soulful riffs with foot stomps, his signature fingerpicking style and — oh, yes — that voice, called "equal parts gravel and molasses" by NPR. Top your list to the times when the After Dark Music Series brings Smither to Middlebury once again.

CHRIS SMITHER

Saturday, January 7, 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 101 in Middlebury. \$14-21. Info: 388-0118, afterdarkmusicseries.com

Across the Universe

"It's a planet! Like the one we're on — only, this one is blue and pretty," one character exclaims in *Baby Universe*, a puppet playlet of apocalyptic proportions by New York City's Wicked Winks Productions and Newbury's Norford Visual Theatre. The premise is flat: The sun is dying, taking Earth, its neighboring planets and all their inhabitants out with it. Deep in a bunker, scientists initiate a lab grown "baby universe" — a miniature proto-tadpole that, with any luck, will soon birth a habitable planet. Incorporating Stephen Hawking theories and references to *Ali* and the *Muppets*, this visually stunning story tackles the bleak end of days with creative vim and vigor. And it's a hell of a way to ring in the new year of 2005.

BABY UNIVERSE

Friday, January 6, and Saturday, January 7, 8 p.m., at Moore House, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College in Hanover. \$10-25. Info: 553-5440, 2432, http://dartmouth.edu



JAN.06 & 07 | THEATER

THU 10:45 PM

food & drink

NO KIDNEY BASH Makes chicken and cheese pie for \$10.00. Tickets and info at a cheddar stand. Sustainable Academy of Culinary Arts (School). Burlington. 8-7:30 p.m. Free. pre-registered: \$10.00. Info: 527-9322.

kids

MAUP-LITERACY STORY TIME See THU 10:45 at 8 p.m.

FLITCHER PLAYBOY Little ones make use of the flash gun before unleashing. Flitcher Elementary School, Cambridge. 8-10:30 a.m. Free. Info: 527-8426.

FRANKLIN-STORY HOUR Layers of the onion world peek up for meek about tales and authors built with yarn. Hudson Library. Hanover. 10-10:45 a.m. Free. Info: 527-5426.

GEORGIA PLAYBOY Revised stories after an announcement on play. Georgia Youth Center. 9:30-11 a.m. Free. Info: 527-8426.

SPIN CAMPFIRE TIME Forms play poems and surf the web online. Fletcher Free Library. Burlington. 3:30-5 p.m. Free. Info: 888-3376.

PALMA A STORY TIME Little kids with nightgowns and teddies as quiet as guinea! Read from books. Lincoln Community Library. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Info: 527-8426.

musical

BIG-BIG WOODS DADDY The Social using natural sound - inspired for kids like 'So So Baby' or - dressed from Maine American jazz and Reggae. Music. Spruce Grove Farming Arts Center. Essex. 10:00-11:00 a.m. Free. Info: 760-4834.

BURLINGTON INDEPENDENTS Lyrics, stories and critique around words. Hainstock Community & Senior Center. Burlington. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free. Info: 888-3376.

DAVID FINCKEL, WILLIAM B. PHILIP SETZER Music. Joint artist duo members of the Grammy-winning Octet. Song. Duo to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Octet. Hainstock Community & Senior Center. Burlington. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free. Info: 888-3376.

Spaulding Auditorium, Hainstock See THU 10:45 at 8 p.m.

MAJIC IN THE LOFT CONCERT SERIES Jan Cowell presents American indie tunes. Ten percent of proceeds benefit the Lake Champlain Film Trust. Brooklyn. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. www.majicintheloft.com. Info: 585-6222.

2021.9 P.M. HOME Open by the artist. David Greenfield and his soul songwriters. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. www.2021.9.com. Info: 585-6222.

arts

YALE THUNDERBOLTS Songs that fly outside the box. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. www.yalethunderbolts.com. Info: 585-6222.

books

"THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT" by Bill Bryson. In conversation with Emily. On. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. www.bryson.com. Info: 585-6222.

theater

ANNE See WED 10:30 at 8 p.m.

stories

AFTERNOON POETRY & CRAFTS WRITING GROUP See THU 10:30 at 8 p.m.

FRI.06

arts

SENIOR ART CLASS See FRI 10:30 at 10:30 a.m.

dance

MALLORY LERSON & ORINCE ORINCE See FRI 10:30 at 7:30 p.m.

NO-ROSTER TANGO DANCE

Musicians of all ages welcome.

The dance floor is yours to go.

High-Low-Lake and cutting by Michael. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

arts

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CLUB OF VIOLET Experts will travel to the club. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

health & fitness

LAUREN WALKING GROUP See FRI 10:30 at 10:30 a.m.

SENILE YOGA FOR EVERYONE Yoga. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

kids

CLIFFORD THE BIG RED DOG LIVE! The big red dog is back. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

COMMUNITY PLAYBOY Golden summer for the big red dog. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

EMERSON FALLS STORY HOUR Young ones. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK GROUP Page turners. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MONTESSORI TUMBLE TIME Physical. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MONTESSORI TUMBLE TIME Physical. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MONTESSORI TUMBLE TIME Physical. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MONTESSORI TUMBLE TIME Physical. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

MONTESSORI TUMBLE TIME Physical. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

language

ITALIAN LITING See FRI 10:30 at 10:30 p.m.

music

LOOSE CHORDS Local young artists. 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

VIOLET RELEASE PARTY 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

VIOLET RELEASE PARTY 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

VIOLET RELEASE PARTY 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

VIOLET RELEASE PARTY 1000. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Free. Info: 585-6222.

outdoors

PALMA A STORY TIME Little kids with nightgowns and teddies as quiet as guinea! Read from books. Lincoln Community Library. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Info: 527-8426.

theater

ANNE See WED 10:30 at 8 p.m.

ANNE See WED 10:30 at 8 p.m.

ANNE See WED 10:30 at 8 p.m.

ANNE See WED 10:30 at 8 p.m.



BROWSE LOCAL EVENTS ON YOUR PHONE! (FRONT) 1-2. (BACK) 1-2. (FRONT) 1-2. (BACK) 1-2.



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take about a minute change and the birth of a planet. — Todd Doughty, noon-2:00 pm 3D planet large and small. See calendar page 21. Master Theater: Hopkins Center, Colchester. Colgate, Hanover N.H., 8 p.m. \$10-35. Info: 603-846-2423.

SAT.07

conferences

BURLINGTON YOGA CONFERENCE High style weekend change through mud on mats. 2-day workshops, meditation and discussion. South Center 1044, Burlington V 30 a.m.-8 p.m. \$55 full-day pass. \$16 single workshop pass.

crafts

SEWING CRAFT CLASSES See SAT.11, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

dance

BALLROOM LESSON & DANCE SOCIAL See Fri. 30 7-10 p.m.

WEST AFRICAN DANCE WORKSHOP See SAT.13, noon-1 p.m.

etc.

FRANKLIN COUNTY HUMANITY SOCIETY BENEFIT AUCTION Animal lovers in the lead. Big bag \$18 helps the critical Lake Isle of St. Lucy animals each year. Dismantled, Shelburne Hotel & Conference Center, South Burlington 7:11 p.m. Free. Info: 224-7662.

film

WAB NODD Supporters of Chicago's Adoptive Mounted Program & Horses for Heroes receive therapy programs for terminal veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress. Queens Sports Bar, Colchester 8 p.m. & 10 p.m. \$10-15. Info: 224-7662.

WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL IN BURLINGTON A website hopes to escape the tourist dragnet in Anishinabe headwaters in the heart of St. Paul. Belling's Room & Museum, Westfield 1 p.m. \$4-10. Info: 457-2555.

food & drink

BURLINGTON WINTER FARMERS MARKET More than 50 local farmers, artisans and producers offer fresh and prepared foods, crafts, and more in a bustling outdoor marketplace with live music, lunch, and more. See calendar page. Memorial Auditorium, Burlington 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Info: 224-7662, info@burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

CALABASHA WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Locally sourced meats, wagyu, beef and maple syrup. Butcher prominently displays all of "shop local" options. Wellness Center 11, Colchester 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. Info: 548-3688.

CAPITAL CITY WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Best veggie honey maple syrup and more change! Hundreds of all season celebration of locally grown food. Sports arena, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Winooski 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Info: 224-7662, market@montpelierfarmersmarket.com.

EMPT'S BOWL, CLIPPER FOR RACE A modern twist on the classic hot dog stand. In the heart of the city, a hot dog stand and support, education, health care and clean water in the village of New Haven, N.H. 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. Info: 224-7662, info@montpelierfarmersmarket.com.

SEE SAT.11, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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Montpelier 2012

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Info/Buttons:

www.MontpelierAlive.org

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Happy New Year

We'll Help You Start the Year Off Right!

Stay well (and well-informed!) this New Year-
check out these upcoming workshops at The Coop!

Monday January 7th 9-10pm

A Folk Healer's Healing Journey with Sandra Linn
Learn how to integrate spiritual and physical health through the power of the mind.

Health Benefits of Eating Fat with Mary Truitt and Lisa Pines
Learn why fat is not your enemy, but a source of energy and joy. And get ideas about this exciting topic. See www.coopvt.com for more.

Friday January 12th 6-7pm



The Alchemist's Journey with Kate Sack

Explore your spirit of alchemy. The most beautiful and great secret
with reason and love is the power of the mind.



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with Santa Claus and his helpers

Friday, December 10
RYAN MONTGOMERY BAND
with Tim Jensen, Friends in Concert

Saturday, December 11
RYAN MONTGOMERY BAND
with Tim Jensen, Friends in Concert

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calendar

5/24/09 400-55

3 pm. Free. Info: 878-340-9300 jazzat7.com

MON.09

arts

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST SERIES Strong and concise course designed to give Stowe officials the basics for 2010. Stowe Civic Hall & Conference Center, 500 Huntington, 1:30-3 p.m. \$200. pre-reg only. 855-364-5698

health & fitness

SENILE YOGA FOR EVERYONE See 7/18. Orange & Elder Center, McCune Multi-Generational Center, Burlington, 10:30-11 am

ZUMBA GOLD See MON.02, 8:00-9 pm

kids

IDEA LA HOTTE PLANDGROUP See MON.02, 10:11-11:30 a.m.

LET'S LEARN JAPANESE Understanding gets advanced to the language and culture of the Land of the Rising Sun with introductory College classes. Army Reserve, Bailey Public Library, Middlebury, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Free. Info: 380-4207

COOKIES WITH MEGAN First graders ages 7-12. Help and cheer in preparation through storybook song, songs and poems. Fletcher Free Library, Burlington, 11-11:30 a.m. Free. Info: 854-8284

SUNSHINE PLAY GROUP See MON.02, 9:30-11 a.m.

WRITING FOR FUN See MON.02, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

musical

THE CHAMPLAIN EDGES New singers and musicians come in on four full-time months with a commitment to originality and a variety of styles. River Street Living Community, South Burlington, 6:15-9:15 p.m. Free. Info: 950-0390

music

SHREVE, YOUNG & KATHLEEN

960-5900 Singers from the Center for Contemporary Studies address climate change, environmental topics, and integrated energy and renewable resources at Trout Haven Studios in a Contemporary World College Multicultural Library, Montpelier, 7 p.m. Free. Info: 252-3330

dinner

AUDITIONING FOR AN EVENING WITH CURRY See MON.05, 6:30 p.m.

AUDITIONING FOR TYRANIC THE MUSICAL See MON.09. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, Burlington, registration \$45-6:10 p.m. auditions, 6:10 p.m.

sports

MARLBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING GROUP See MON.02, 10 a.m. noon

TUE.10

arts

WINTERBANK WATERCOLOR CLASS Painters learn the process with their palette in a hands-on course with local artist Don Rupp. See 6/18. Winterbank, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Free. pre-reg only. 950-4208

education

HIGH SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE & PANEL A panel of high school students and graduates describe the Nelson education. Lee Chapman, Westport High School, Conners, 8:30-9 p.m. Free. Info: 963-2827

etc.

COMMUNITY KICK SHOT NIGHT See 7/16/09, 8 p.m.

film

COMMUNITY CINEMA Thomas La Chute's *Gay Rights*. First Lady and 1978 film about the civil rights activists' efforts to desegregate an all-white high school. Hampshire, Burlington, 7 p.m. Free. Info: 963-5065

health & fitness

WOMEN & GIRLS ZUMBA CLASS First period after lunch, led by Lillian and other fitness instructors. See 7/18. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Free. Info: 854-8284

kids

CREATIVE TUESDAYS See 7/18/02, 3:30-4 p.m.

PAPER STORY HOUR See 7/18/02, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

HIGHKITE STORY HOUR See 7/18/02, 10:11 a.m.

SKINCARE WITH ROBERT See 7/18/02, 11-11:30 a.m.

MUSIC & STORIES: SNOWFLAKES Catch tales and moments regarding the snow-covered forests to crystals, each one of them unique. 10:40 Lake Aqueduct and Sports Center, Community Center for Lake Champlain, Burlington, 11 a.m. Regular admission: \$10.00. \$2.00 for kids 12 and under. Info: 537-204-4289

SIXTH WHEEL PLAYGROUP See 7/18/02, 10-11 a.m.

ST. ALBANS PLAYGROUP See 7/18/02, 9:30-10 a.m.

language

PRASE-CAFE See 7/18/02, 9:30 p.m.

musical

SALLY PINKAS, JAM HOLLER, SCARLETT & SAGE & FIONA The world's renowned a cappella group. The group's debut 30-minute recording is available on CD. See 7/18/02, 8:30 p.m. Tickets: \$10.00. Info: 537-204-4289

THE CHAMPLAIN EDGES New singers and musicians come in on four full-time months with a commitment to originality and a variety of styles. River Street Living Community, South Burlington, 6:15-9:15 p.m. Free. Info: 950-0390

theater

AUDITIONING FOR TYRANIC THE MUSICAL See MON.09, 6:10-6:30 p.m.

WED.11

community

WORKSHOP See WED.18, 8-10 p.m.

community

WINDUO CALLIOPHORE FOR A SAFE AND PEACEFUL COMMUNITY Religious and social issues. See 7/18/02, 8:30-9:30 p.m. Free. Info: 950-4208

crafts

KNIT NIGHT Daily needlework for beginners, knitters and their friends. See 7/18/02, 7-9 p.m.

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The agreement with BCBSVT provides local Chamber of Commerce members with the benefits of health coverage through the state's only Vermont-based health insurer. More importantly, it assures protection from subscription rate increases, maintaining current subscription rate levels for another full year and ensuring that no single-digit rate increases for 2015 (pending regulatory approval). Until the end of 2011, VACE will hold CCA A-1000 provider for all enrolled

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- **Secret Saucer Contest:** 5-7pm at the Pump House. Win prizes for big splashes, crazy crashes, funny faces, etc. All ages.
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2011 in Review

A look back at the year in local music news BY DAN BOLLES

Floods, fires, freezes, Higgsbos. Two thousand eleven proved to be an unusually dramatic year in Vermont and, by extension, Vermont music. So before we close the books on the year that was, here's a look back at some of the major stories from the last 12 months.

After the Flood

There simply was not a bigger story in Vermont this year than the tropical disaster that ravaged the state on August 28. Even those who escaped unharmed were "affected." Some touched everyone. Not surprisingly, the biggest music stories of 2011 sprang from the aftermath of the storm.

At the top of the list are just items. Plus, Vermont's most famous place—more than a beach to and all beach to at the Champlain Valley Exposition in September. The jamming was the band's first show in Vermont since its "flooded" at Country in 2004, and anticipation was predictably high. Hundreds of eager fans went more than 24 hours in line for tickets, camping out on the street in front of the Phipps Center the day before tickets went on sale, and turning downtown Burlington into something like the famous Irish pub jam on New Year's night. Much would say it was worth the wait.

As the show, Phipps went through a mix of losses, opening nearly the entirety of their considerable catalog, while tens of thousands of fans weighed in and showed their hearts. A full moon—and a killer light show. All told, the Phipps band's 19th show went down for \$100,000 in relief dollars.

Not to be outdone, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals lost their considerable cash to local "do and out" acts, as well. The band played a sold-out benefit show at the Phipps Music Stage in October that was a fundraiser on Vermont Public Television. With that show, a charity auction, and a \$1000 per ticket acoustic gig at Sugarbush, GPN accounted for more than \$150,000 in relief donations.

While those two bands garnered the lion's share of press about the well, if not of their benefit, they were hard-

ly the only locals to rock for the cause. There were dozens of smaller local benefits in venues all over the state in the months following the storm. Additionally, a number of benefit recordings and albums were released as the whole local scene rose to the challenge.

Closing Time

Two thousand eleven saw the passing of two beloved live music institutions in Vermont: Langdon Street Cafe in Montpelier and Parson in Burlington.

Montpelier's quirky music hotspot was the first to go. Citing financial difficulty, LSC owner Mark Hammond and her partner, booking manager Ben T. Mitchell, made the heart wrenching decision to close the cafe's doors at the end of May. During its six and a half years, LSC became the kind of place that Montpelier's music and arts scene. For those who other venue in the state—especially Burlington's Radio Bean, upon which LSC was loosely modeled—was in a way a role in its community. "Montpelier" has become a little less so.

In the wake of LSC's closing, the impact that it seems to be trying to overcome its musical identity. A few venues have stepped up to soften the blow, including the respected Black Door and Radio Bean Cafe, both of which host live music throughout the week. And, of course, there's always Charlie O's and Pastiche. But the word remains.

In Burlington, Parson closed, either abruptly and/or great confusion, in September. While the prospect of losing the 100 restaurant/live-music venue in Burlington was not nearly as profound as LSC's closing, it still was significant. In the year—and a half that local song-writer Joe Adler had handled booking for the club, Parson went from some of the highest grossing and most successful



Explosion at the Burlington Expo for the 'Flooded' benefit concert.

After the flood and the loss of performers and turned the Pearl Street jazz joint into a legitimate weekly entertainment option. Adler has since moved to handle booking at Radio Bean and has found a new home, bringing a similarly progressive booking philosophy to the already eclectic club.

What's So Funny?

For the last few years, standup comedy in Vermont has been on the rise. And now, the laughing local comedy scene has a home of its very own. In October, Burlington welcomed Vermont's first comedy club, Lenny.

Prior to Lenny opening, ground zero for local comedy was the upstairs at Parson Cafe. From established comedians looking for a place to perform to newbies working through stage fright, the Vermontans Coffeehouse was the place to be for cutting-edge local comedy. But when Lenny opened, it was the market, calling into question the open mic's longevity, comedian Ryan Kruger jumped into action and purchased the club.

Lenny now hosts weekly open mics on Thursdays, and a pair of regular showcases on Fridays. Moving forward, Kruger plans to host a Saturday-night showcase and begin improv-comedy nights. He also hopes to bring in regional and national touring comedians.

Odds and Ends

Dave was the only local tragedy worthy of big-name media coverage. In January, the stage and recording facilities at Parson's Green Room in Craftsbury were destroyed in a fire. So in February, a raft of local musicians, led by Phipps's Troy Anastasia, rocked the Higher Ground Ballroom and raised serious serious change.

Like a promotional audi in MSR 2 records and Angelplay Media scored a copy this summer when they booked Neutral Milk Hotel's Jr. M. Morgan for a solo show at Burlington's Union on Universalist Church. The sold-out show was the first stop on the relative newcomer's much-buzzed-about return tour. It was so successful that MSR and AM plan to utilize the church as a venue for similarly big acts as a regular basis. Next up: Sonic Youth's Thursday show on Sunday, January 29.

The Occupy Burlington movement was treated to a unique performance from a notable Burlington expert when Gopal Kerkela's Eugene Maltz showed up for an impromptu performance atop the fountain in City Hall Park in October. Maltz wasn't the only star to lend his voice in solidarity with the Queen City camp. A few weeks earlier, Benji Lee Guthrie and her husband, Johnny Tron, led protesters in a dog along march up Church Street.

Grace Potter had a big year. First, the inaugural Grand Fun North Festival on the Burlington Waterfront was an unshakable success. Two full days this August, thousands rocked to big-name acts such as Taj Mahal and Phipps and the Tattlers, as well as an impressive roster of local bands. Potter was even joined onstage by country superstar Kacey Musgraves for a rendition of their duet, "You & Tequila." By the way, that date was nominated for a pair of Grammys. In 2012.

Potter wasn't the only Vermonters garnering Grammy attention. Local composer Al Good is up for Best New Age Album for his 2011 record, *North* on Soma. ☐

SOUNDbites

BY DAN BELLES

Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgiven?

Probably

Ah, New Year's Eve! Though on the surface, NYE would seem to be a favored holiday of this here party-loving column, I've gotta admit, I've never been a fan. First of all, NYE is another night, as scores of people who only go out once or twice a year get historically hammered and/or vomited over favorite nightspots. It's kind of like St. Patrick's Day, only without the vaguely offensive cultural stereotyping. Second, has there ever been an NYE that's really lived up to the hype? I can't think of another holiday that requires so much planning for generally so little payoff.

On the plus side, there is certainly no shortage of things to do. Obviously, there are several First Night celebrations around the state — though, technically, shouldn't it be "Last Night"? But I digress. (New Year's resolution No. 1: Stop digressing as much. Ah, but there I go again.)

Anyway, with so much on the



The Jitters

docket, here are a few entertainment options for NYE that may have slipped under your radar in all the hubbub. (Resolution No. 2: Never use the word "hubbub" again.)

Grace Potter and the Nocturnals decided not to do their annual three-night NYE run at Higher Ground due to just much to the dining of fans. But, come on, people. They have a two-day festival in Burlington this summer — Grand Funst North — plus, two significant items benefit that fall. Throw in that band **CATHARINE PUPPLE** recently left the band, and you can understand why they elected to break with tradition this year. However, Vermont's unique joke joint is not bereft of local talent to ring in the new year. Opening for **MATT IN SLACKTAN** at the Ballroom that Saturday, December 31, is none other than Burlington's own mistress of light and dark: good and evil, naughty and nice, **MADE VENTURE**. On the surface, the experimental loop-loving surrealist on drums so fluently crooning. Section may seem an odd pairing. OK, they kind of are. Still, I would strongly encourage folks planning to drop the ball at HG to not drop the ball — see what I did there? — and show up early and catch the opener. One, Vermont's new record, *Virtues of Virtue*, was easily among the best local recordings of the year — see page 57. Two, you would be hard-pressed to find a more daring, inventive and progressive songwriter. Three, because I said so.

Looking to just out while rocking in 2012? Might we suggest the **JEAN**

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SEASONS at Moravie's nightclub. Most of the local Dead acolytes begin a three-night stand at the club this Thursday, December 28, and rock night on through New Year's Eve. Doing a little jam-band math on the fly, that means they will play roughly seven songs total. Just kidding. Deadhead? (Resolution No. 3: Not a lame jam-band joke.)

Meanwhile, at the House That Pansie Built, local roxy soul man **JERRAM PAIN** and his band take the stage on NYE with support from Montreal's **PATRICK LEHMAN**. No word on whether **JUST MICHAELS** will be joining Painsie. But we can hope. We can hope.

Over the river is the **NOISE, SLUDGE PHANTOM** is hosting a NYE throwdown at the Monkey House featuring a sampling of the Burlington area's favorite odd indie bands, including **PAULIE GUNN**, **ROTHAINE**, **MOSEY** and **SHOUTFRAMES** (Resolution no. 4: Write a profile on *Idiot's Blush*. Those guys are awesome.)

The Capital City gets in on New Year's Eve, as **THEY WOUND** and **SCAMMALS** main **Positive Pie 2** into a dance hall undulating with dub and reggae vibes. Also, it's apparently "Indie night" at PFP, so there's that. (As in: Is it the idea of indie night kind of creepy? I get the logic. Women get in free, ergo, lots of women will come. But the reality is usually the opposite, right? Because

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FOUR YEAR STRONG

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PRE-NYE DANCE PARTY

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MARTIN SEXTON

MUDAS VERITAS

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THY WILL BE DONE

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CREATIVE BLACK TIE

THE HIT MEN

8 PM - 11 PM - 1234 FULTON

VERMONT

MUSICIANS' SUMMIT

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REAL ESTATE

THE BARBERS, WILDLIFE

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HIGHER GROUND

COMEDY BATTLE VIII

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GREENSKY BLUEGRASS

JAYORA

8 PM - 11 PM - 1234 FULTON

MATT NATHANSON

8 PM - 11 PM - 1234 FULTON

LIGHTS

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JUSTICE LIVING

SOUND**bites**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63

what you're essentially saying when you advertise a hidden night is "we need to better women to come." (Hah.)

Moving on, local blues man **DAVE KELLER** released one hell of an album earlier this year, called *White Fire Coming From The*. The record featured a smorgasbord of funk, soul and R&B classics that reflected Keller's musical leanings. But the remarkable thing was how well he plays the soul dynamic. Keller is best known for his monster guitar chops, but dude can

seriously howl. He'll be at the Black Door in Montpelier on NTE. Sorry, ladies, you've gotta pay for this one.

BiteTorrent

We won't have to wait long for the first great local albums of 2012. Four days into the new year, to be precise. On Wednesday, **Jessica & Katie Truett** and the Tall Boys — low that name — release their new album, with a party on tap for Saturday, January 7, at the Black Door in Montpelier.

Though I have yet to hear the full record, Truett was kind enough to send along a teaser track. She does, ribs the material as being on the "water edge" of Americana, resembling Kilauea, but with a looser-took touch. I'm inclined to agree. Like Kilauea, Truett has a sweetly evocative voice. But the twangy atmospherics with which she surrounds herself lend the material a darker, heavier quality. Truett also writes that the new *Wooden Dancer* album should be along sometime in February or March. Wow. 2012 is already awesome.

Continuing on a theme, **Joan Levinson** releases his new record with his long band the Valcours. *The Side of Me*, at Nectar's on Saturday, January 7. A follow-up to his 2009 effort, *Indeterminant Race*, the album finds a more interpretive and mature songwriter. We'll dub 1.1 on the record after the new year, but it's safe to say Levinson has a few changes on his mind, and he's done a masterful job capturing them in the time around.

But wait, there's more. Former Burlington and heady hip-hop/jazz singer-songwriter **Visionary** — "Dance" girl? — returns to Vermont on Friday, January 6, with a new album in tow called *TRULIE-1*. After perusing some tunes on his website, I'll say this: the world probably won't be begging for a third singing and duet disc. But new it has one. It also has a song called "Jesus Puppy." So we've got that going for us, which is nice. *Visionary* will be at the Fluffy Collective in downtown Burlington.

Happy anniversary to the Miley House! On December 26, the Mayday celebrates five years as the area's biggest indie bar spot with a blowout

local showcase including **RED BARK**, **JULY PETERSON**, **VERNA**, the **SHRETTES** — who played the first show at the Mayday after the joint changed hands five years ago, FYI — **KELLY SMITH** and, of course, **PROUD BEAR**, the man largely responsible for the indie-rock renaissance in the North in the last half decade. Congrats, guys. And thanks.

Last but not least, welcome back, **Baragundy Thursdays**. A staple at dearly departed Patrons, the singer-songwriter showcase hosted by **JOE MILES** makes its return, albeit on a slightly smaller scale, at the 1/3 Lounge earlier this month. After a holiday hiatus, it's back full time beginning Thursday, December 26, with the **POISON GRAYS**. The following Thursday, January 5, the **AMULET BROTHERHOOD**'s **PERI MILES** is the featured guest. @



Jessica & Katie



Listening In

Since it's the last Saturdays of 2011, in this week's totally self-indulgent column segment, I'm sharing a tiny random sampling of what was on my third turntable CD player 8-track player etc. this year.

Ben Harper
Rock On

A.J. Buckley
Delirious

Thao & The Dea
Thao & The Dea

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THU. 12/30 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

FRI. 12/31 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SAT. 1/1 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
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SUN. 1/2 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

MON. 1/3 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

TUE. 1/4 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

WED. 1/5 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

THU. 1/6 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

FRI. 1/7 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SAT. 1/8 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SUN. 1/9 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

MON. 1/10 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

TUE. 1/11 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

WED. 1/12 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

THU. 1/13 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

FRI. 1/14 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SAT. 1/15 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SUN. 1/16 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

MON. 1/17 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

TUE. 1/18 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

WED. 1/19 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

THU. 1/20 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

FRI. 1/21 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SAT. 1/22 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SUN. 1/23 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

MON. 1/24 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

TUE. 1/25 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

WED. 1/26 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

THU. 1/27 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

FRI. 1/28 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SAT. 1/29 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
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\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

SUN. 1/30 - NECTAR'S
2011 YEAR-END PARTY
8PM-11PM
DJ: JIMMY K
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00
\$10.00 + \$1.00 SUGAR + \$1.00

MON. 1/31 - NECTAR'S
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REVIEW *this*

Let the Record Show

Recounting the best Vermont-made recordings of 2011 **BY DAN HOLLES**

Remember 2009? Among other things it was a transitional year for Vermont music, as several longtime acts disbanded to split up or went on hiatus. For a new generation of acts to emerge, in 2010, many of these acts blossomed, establishing the new era of great Vermont music.

While recent years have seen a return to rock and roll roots in Vermont, 2011 was notable for diversification. In fact, so many genres and subgenres appeared that it's hard to say any one style characterized, or even dominated, Vermont music. The result is vibrant and varied a collection of local voices in any given memory to wit:

Folk and Americana have always had a strong presence in Vermont, and this year was no exception. We heard traditional strains from the likes of the Mid-state Playboys, Wiley Lowrie, and Red Coffee from Ezra Jones, or Gully Gully, and from the other end of the acoustic spectrum, stellar solo and solo-folk debuts from Les Jeffers and Lila Blue. At Josh Hahn, gentle progressive and haunting Haugtyr's returned with a sparkling, long-awaited sophomore record loaded with new tunes. Kristina Stykes melded fiddles and mandolin with touches of indie-pop sensibilities. Erin McDevitt walked her close to the state's rock music power expert with a polished tribute to his country. And why not celebrate the Western High fiddlers during a special debut before hanging the last lengths of these new.

Along these strands heavily on the axis, as well, delivering overall gritty variety. Newcomers Something With Strings joined in several shades of blue on their punchy debut. Rantabros' upstarters Gold Tone posted a double shot of whoddy-guns on their first full-length. And another Playboys, Al Dema, closed out with his side project, the Dazzlers.

As ever, Vermonters suffered no shortage of rock and/or roll. Blue-collar brass bands Cafeconcerto and Les Bricks each added up to the bar with country-rock grooves. Vermont local singer-songwriter Josh Brooks showed the kids a thing or two about punchy blues-rock with his debut album, *Tangerine*. Brookes got gritty on their sophomore set and punk effort. Not to be out-eviled, the Fast continued riding the New Wave on their latest. Presk Band paid homage to their heroes with a remarkable record. Now this/collection What Bush Lake introduced Upper Valley rock to

outdoorie rockers with releases from the Pilgrims and Great Travel Artist Garde De Green got gritty, Squad City got proggy, Public Projects got indie, and Western Spout got thrashy. Not to be outdone, punk rockers found new poaches from Land Billy and girls Dull Piglet, northern degenerates Gas & Oil rock, at coarse, Vermont legends the Wolfe.

clock with a transcendentalist at the tender age of 12. *Two-and* from Maya Pyles put it all together delivering a signature work. Sam Green & the Boys proved there is more than one Green to watch out for. Sara Wills made a name for herself on a pop-able indie release.

Top-notch hip-hop continued flowing from the 102. Deary Dick brought Wes Coats from to Memphis and Alicia Moore made a hip-hop forward, funk studio pop trip. Plus one and study Lady moved forward and got high (reworked). Sugar 2nd Agenda also released a new record, further cementing their impressive local legacy.

Gypsy just continued to do the great work for local legends. Mike Martin and Tito Garcia inaugurated bassline club. They might be Gypsy's revealed a gem in writing as a songwriting partner. And some polished, well-trimmed added. Further chapter in his "get sick, do it alone" series.

Local atmospheric blues interlarded stepped out of the shadows and into the spotlight as a searching debut of original compositions. *Seven Years and the Missing*. One heard plenty more for grassroots. And how beautiful proved warmers isn't just for hard rockers anymore.

Complexities of others figured prominently this year in larger pop and indie recovery efforts. *Dead Night* first lost serious star power to the cause, and Vermont (VE Artists for Flood Relief) offered some local support. Meanwhile, Chantrelle reached a full EP of remixed solo hits, due to her local roots. Memphis's Golden State Music Co. Collective released two indie pop albums, introducing the state to a broader indie scene on the coast.

Given last year's topography, Vermont on state released some good ones in the past two years. *Highways* has the road with a rocky grin. *Prevalent* Year's history stepped forward. *Public* had a debut album on an on-demand record payment. *Tumbling* broke got back to bluesy blues. *Francesca* Bandstand started from Boston. *Green* proved to be a strong folk, indie, and Oldies made us all with their blues come home.

And so we move forward, looking at the Vermont scene. A strong record made it made that many of the aforementioned records are among the best of 2011. But tradition dictates that we choose only 10. So these 10 have represent that state's best of the best, in no particular order. As always, thanks for listening, and for supporting local music. ☺

TOP 10 VERMONT RECORDINGS OF 2011

Concrete Struts
Eat Their Weight in Struts

Barkley, Rembrandt

The Antiest and Red Banquet
Who Cares if We're Dope? (Tracks 3, 5, 6, 7)

The Lyngbyrd Civil Wars
A Hard Act to Follow

Split Tongue Crew, Split Tongue Crew
Hula Hula, Verses of Versus

Let's Whopps The Spiritual Days

Pamela, Christy Pops EP

Shorelines, Kiss My Guts EP

Landing, Giant Places

Something With Strings

Public Projects

Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

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Josh Brooks

Josh Brooks

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Lost in Space

Adam Putnam, BCA Center

Visit to the "Adam Putnam: Magic Lanterns" exhibition now at the BCA Center will no doubt be drawn to the show's eponymous "l lanterns" installed in the front and back rooms of the gallery — "Unlabeled (Red Hallway)" and "Unlabeled (Green Hallway)," respectively. The devices, which date to the 17th century and much later, first gained in early motion picture development, here project unpeopled architectural visions upon the walls. But while the murky, seemingly endless rooms are intriguing, viewers should not dismiss Putnam's one small, black-and-white photograph and five modest drawings in the BCA's front room. Despite the show's title, these works represent the heart of the exhibition.

Putnam's compelling mixed-media works on paper are deft renderings of imaginary structures — architectural fragments with unded interior and exterior spaces, like the ruins of a past civilization. He describes these works as "fragments of space." In "Unlabeled (Kitchen)" and "Unlabeled (Bathroom)" these spaces appear in situ and not confined to the paper, frame or wall.

In "Unlabeled (Kitchen)," Putnam has filled the entire drawing surface with a red brick wall interrupted by a cross-hatched passageway. One side of the wall remains unsketched, perhaps suggesting an infinite, or impromptu, edifice. In a subtle glimpse of a reflective surface, the passage leading toward a darkened, rectangular entryway is mirrored on the floor. "Unlabeled," a mixed-media work on paper depicts a squat, red-brick building fixed in a grassy, rocky, char coal void. With no visible doors or windows, it's a no-seeming escape, bringing to mind a monolith or a crucifixion.

"Unlabeled (Simple)" depicts the exterior of a fortress-like structure. The impenetrable mass of white brick recalls



REVIEW

Is this eponymous photograph and Putnam's drawings, physical and psychological spaces in transit. Real or imagined architectural spaces function as divergent sites in which the artist, or the viewer, can imagine a self. Putnam's architectural contrivances seem to be inviting habitation, promising both desire and uncertainty.

His lanterns, however, fall short of such intriguing results. Putnam says he first conceived of the idea for his lanterns after seeing a film by experimental filmmaker Ray Lo. Ken work Arger, who utilized the device to project a fantasy scene. Following the artist's intention that his lanterns look "like they could fall apart any minute," they are decidedly not fragile constructions. They are

flexible and rather coarsely made, illuminated via dim electric light rather than flickering candle, the lanterns are set on sturdy pedestals several feet from the gallery walls.

The lantern's flimsy sides are sandwiched with a signpost, the exposed lanterns (in the floor only an industrial carpet remnant) and single bare bulb reveal the inner workings — the still life of the enterprise. The viewer might be momentarily captivated by the buzz, "magical" projections, yet may leave wondering, *Is that all there is?*

Ultimately, Putnam's lanterns are unconvincing; they are a limited illustration of a concept, not an expansive engagement with one. In his works on paper and his photography, Putnam constructs fantastic realities, narrating a fiction worth believing.

SUMRU TEJIN

PUTNAM'S COMPELLING MIXED-MEDIA WORKS ON PAPER ARE DEFT RENDERINGS OF IMAGINARY STRUCTURES.



British artist Rachel Whiteread's sculpture "Ghost," a full-scale cast of the interior of an entire living space in plaster. Similarly, Putnam's drawing suggests the presence of something not seen, just as deft as the large of habitable space. In the helpful cellphone audio tour of the exhibition, Putnam acknowledges that small photograph as the "keynote for the rest of the show." The silver gelatin self-portrait depicts the bare chested, 4-foot-tall artist improbably folded behind the glass surface of a small cabinet. His face obscured by a corona of glare, Putnam takes his own picture via a cable connected to the unseen camera. A viewer can't help but wonder how he can contrive himself without breaking the glass. It's an uneasy image, like an anonymous man's accident that simultaneously repels and attracts us.

A Adam Putnam: Magic Lanterns" is a mixed-media installation, drawings and photography. BCA Center, Burlington, through February 25.

Fiber Options

Dianne Shullenberger

BY MEGAN JAMES



The hundreds of fabric scraps pinned to Dianne Shullenberger's fiber-collage work stations look like mounted butterflies. Each specimen is in a different color and texture, some silky, some rough and some with delicate edges that curl around the pin like wings.

Shullenberger, 67, uses these scraps to create landscape-inspired collages as intricate, they could almost pass as watercolor paintings. The trick, she says, is in the layering. She begins with large blocks of color and builds them up and she has perfectly captured the chaos on a bog, or a stand of poppy birches.

All of Shullenberger's work — including colored-pencil drawings — is a response to nature. "I spend a portion of every day outside," she says and adds, "I love space." In fact, she was a physical education teacher before moving to Vermont in the late '70s. Shullenberger likes lakes, lakes and lakes, and always brings a camera to capture images for use in her art.

Shullenberger's gallery and studios are attached to her Jericho home, which, she discovered after moving in, once belonged to William "Stone-Isle" Bentley (1848-1910), the pioneering snow-bike photographer. During a restoration project two decades ago, Shullenberger uncovered items he had used in developing his photos.

The works in her gallery will also travel to Shullenberger's favorite places, such as a trail in Clarel's Hump and a stream in West Bolton. One relaxed-pencil drawing depicts the silver stream

seen of an early morning, only full from a Mount Mansfield trail. "People who don't hike would never see this," she notes.

Michigan also figures in Shullenberger's work — she spends summers at her husband's family cottage on Lake Michigan. The artist is mesmerized by the sand dunes there, she recreates them, along with wildflowers, bogs and swamps, in her collages.

SHULLENBERGER CREATES LANDSCAPE-INSPIRED COLLAGES SO INTRICATE, they could almost pass as watercolor paintings.

Shullenberger has a lot of scraps. She goes up in a Midwestern house full of fabric and sewing notions, and her mother made all of her clothes. "I assumed every one's mom made their clothes," she reflects.

During her years as a PE teacher in Chicago,

Shullenberger pinned in watercolor and dabbed in a kind of stuffed-quilting technique called trapunto, but, she says, she found the handwork boring. So she began experimenting with collages. She was attracted to the "new edges and textures," she says. "It seemed wilder"

By the time she moved with her husband and two kids to Jericho in 1979, she had converted to pursuing fabric collages. At her studio, Shullenberger pulls out some examples of her early collage work. At first, she'd often make free-form shapes from big swaths of a single fabric cut to a desired shape. Gradually, she began working with much smaller scraps, layering them over one another to arrive at just the right line and form. These days, Shullenberger says, "No piece is cut," she'll only cut fabric into

small parts her roughly the size she needs. And if a box shows up on more than one piece in a single composition, she uses different fabrics for each recurrence of it. "In white, that can get complicated," she says. "So I use different themes."

This means she goes through hundreds of fabric. Shullenberger visits fabric stores everywhere she goes. "I'll buy it without even buying a project in mind," she says. Friends and acquaintances are constantly sending her old ties, skirts and handkerchiefs to incorporate in her work.

"Fabrics have many different personalities," she writes in her artist statement, "and I manipulate them by wrinkling, curling, pulling threads, cutting through layers, reversing sides, exposing raw edges, and constantly showing the textures and color combinations."

Shullenberger has a special place in her heart for sheer materials, the angle of which is showcased in a recent collages called "Dawning Fog." She used layers and layers of sheer scraps to create a thick, visceral mist rising off sunset-cured water.

But it's not just the fabric scraps that give Shullenberger's collages their depth. "The thread is almost as important as the fabric," she says. A drawer at her workstation brims with spools of every color. Some threads are bulky, while others are silky smooth. Shullenberger uses them to make subtle color changes, but also to "stitch," say, tufts of tall grasses or debris along a river's edge.

She knows a place has succeeded when it looks different to her every time she sees it. "I travel back into it," she says. It's all about communing with nature, something Shullenberger is thankful to be able to do daily. "Every day," she says. "It's like finding new art." ☐

B Shullenberger's work is part of "Under the Sky" at the Jericho Center for the Arts, 100 Main St., Jericho, VT 05465. Tickets: \$10. (905) 881-1111. www.jerichocenterforthearts.com



'The Built Environment' In Vermont, we're often so busy adorning the natural world that we overlook the beauty of the man-made. Take a closer look at "The Built Environment" at Karen Jantzen's Darkroom Gallery through January 22. Photographers from all over Vermont, and the world, capture sweeping arches and elegant dovetails, a row-platoned empty parking lot, and swirling deprecated store facades. The work honors the risks and engineering feats of architects, but also the evidence of the people who've navigated — or abandoned — these constructed spaces. Think cherry plows, vibrant and colorful flags, graffiti and smashed windows. Pictorial, "Shine the Light" by Marco Vignaro.

BURLINGTON AREA ART SHOWS 4C 7/21

NICHOLAS HIGGS "How the People" series depicts portraits of some south of Maine. Maine, New Brunswick and Maine. Through January 22 at Burlington Art Center. Info: 802-247-2047

PAUL HALLAT BARNES "Thugs, graffiti, street signs and words" series. **LEONARD OBERLIN** Abstract paintings. **GRAN RAY** Abstracts. Through January 22 at the Daily Planet in Burlington. Info: 802-247-4302

PATRICK LYNN SUMNER "Remembering the Art of Photography" with full of photography, painting, and video play. Through December 31 at Marjorie's in Burlington. Info: 802-405-4040

PHIL & BOB Illustrations by Michael Hellig, Anthropomorphic Animals, a cartoonist, and a cartoonist. **OCCUPY THE WORLD** "Public art and the Occupy movement." Through December 31 at the Daily Planet in Burlington. Info: 802-247-4302

PETER SANDRICK Landscape and still life paintings. **SPENCER STACY** Abstract painting and wood. **FRANCIS JANTZEN** the gallery is a campaign to remember the state of its campus. Through January 13 at the Daily Planet in Burlington. Info: 802-247-4302

ROBERT J. JALLA-CARDINAL Landscape and figurative paintings by Jalla and his son. Also paintings by Jack Keller, John Olson and Jacob Neuge. Through January 13 at the Daily Planet in Burlington. Info: 802-247-4302

DAVIDSON Large-scale painting of a lake. **DAVIDSON** Large-scale painting of a lake. Through December 31 at Marjorie's in Burlington. Info: 802-405-4040

STEWART MCINTYRE "It's all about water" photographs. **Photography** collage. Through December 31 at Pictorial House, Pictorial House. Info: 802-247-2047

STEVEN GORDON Paintings by the artist. **STEVEN GORDON** Paintings by the artist. Through December 31 at Burlington Art Center. Info: 802-247-2047

STEWART MCINTYRE "It's all about water" photographs. **Photography** collage. Through December 31 at Pictorial House, Pictorial House. Info: 802-247-2047

"THE WOLLY DOLL" Artwork that explores the relationship between children's stories and the world. Through January 31 at United States in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

THOMAS GORDON Artwork by Thomas Gordon. Through December 31 at Stewart Gordon in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

THOMAS GORDON Artwork by Thomas Gordon. Through December 31 at Stewart Gordon in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

WOLLY DOLL Artwork by Thomas Gordon. Through December 31 at Stewart Gordon in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

WINTER LANDSCAPES Paintings by Susan B. Winter. Through January 31 at Stewart Gordon in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

WINTER SHOW Paintings by Susan B. Winter. Through January 31 at Stewart Gordon in Burlington. Info: 802-247-2047

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TRIOLOGY**

1/24: AN EVENING WITH MARC COHN

**1/26: REMEE TAYLOR
AND JOE BOLTON
IF YOU EVER LEAVE ME
I'M GOING WITH YOU**

2/3: COCKTAILS WITH LARRY MILLER

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art

BURLINGTON AREA ART SHOWS & Fairs

continued

JOY FOR YOUNG OF HEARTS & HOLLY DAY SHOW
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through January 31st. Two Rivers/Artmaking
Studio in White River. Junction. Info: 295-5801

WOMEN OF ART - Artists and crafters on sale for the
month. Through January 21 at Historic Gallery in
Windsor. Info: 414-1000

QUARTER - Paper items of historical crafts and
fine art by local artists. Through December 30 at
Studio Place Art in Windsor. Info: 495-1070

CRYSTAL GARDENS - Crystal and jewelry and
all sorts of art. Through January 21 at Historic
Gallery in Windsor. Info: 414-1000

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'HURRAY SMALL PICTURE SHOW' You can't eat art of media by Jane Kurylo. Peter Hamilton, Elizabeth Depardon, Tom Hogenstad and Lisa Angel. Through January 1 at Vermont Fine Art Gallery in Stowe. Info: 253-9833

HARRY WIDOM Oil paintings from Maine. Through January 1 at Art Center of New Bedford. Info: 252-7880.

SHALL I DANCE? Study by gallery artist. Including photographs by Sheryl Treves and country musicians by Lyle Day. Through January 31 at Wood Branch Gallery & Sculpture Park in Stowe. Info: 253-8944.

regional

HOMER'S HOLIDAY SALE & EXHIBITION Work in a variety of media by Vermont and New Hampshire artists. Through December 30 at Art & Soul and Art Center Lebanon. Info: 603-461-3107



Peter Langrock Peter Langrock does it all. The founder and managing partner of Langrock Sperry & Wool is one of Vermont's best-known lawyers. But he's also a farmer who raises beef cattle, sheep, horses and, as he calls them "rather Old McDonald characters" from his home in Salisbury. He fishes for trout, hangs with his three English writers and more ranch-handred trotters. On top of all that, he somehow finds time to paint. His impressionist style landscapes and still lifes are at the gallery at Burlington College through January 13, as part of the school's campaign to renovate a historic portion of its campus. Come see the friends, wife of this Renaissance man. Painted. "Winter Landscape"

NATIVE AMERICAN ART AT EASTMONTIC **MEANS ARTS FROM THE NORTH: INDIAN OF ART** More than 100 decorative and contemporary works, many on view for the first time, taken up as artists that explore continuity and change within North American indigenous cultures. Through March 11 at Hood Museum, Dartmouth College, Lebanon. Info: 603-444-2808.

THE LION "Baldy's" photo series by the artist and professor of art at Colby. Through January 31 at Putnam State Art Museum. Info: 253-644-3376.

southern

ALAN ADAMS' WORKSHOPS "Women in a Circle" paintings expanding the concept of which thought is transformed into color. Through December 31 at Gallery in the Woods in Guilford. Info: 253-4273-2.

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The Year in Film 2011

Our critics look back on their picks and pans — and preview some flicks still to come

BY RICK KISNOAK & HARGOT HARRISON

RICK KISNOAK: As a member of the Broadcast Film Critics Association, I get to pick decider every December week of the year's releases will be honored with a *Critic's Choice* award in January. It's usually a lot of fun to look back at the best movies and get together a list of nominees from scratch. Traditionally, the greatest challenge is whittling down my list of candidates. But 2011 has been a bit easier. For the first time, I found it hard to come up with enough nominees.

Not that it's been a terrible 12 months — unless you happen to own a theater (ticket sales have been down all year). Now that I've seen the best 2011 has to offer, though, I feel a fair in retrospect as a reasonably understanding. There was no shortage of good films — just a new absence of great ones. Is it me? Did I miss something? When you look back on it, how would you say the year measured up?

HARGOT HARRISON: This was a sad year for moviegoers here, with reviews, posters, and advertisements the work of the day, but I think it was an excellent year for critics and foreign film fans. Directors are experimenting all over the place, whether they're showcasing their narratives into bold new depictions of striking images (*The Tree of Life*), *We Have to Talk About Kevin*, or simply the spectacle (*Melancholia*, *Toke Shelter*) or resurrecting vintage movie styles in loving detail (*Dinner*, *The Artist*, *Tinker, Soldier*). I argue pushing boundaries (*Shame*). The results aren't always great, but the adventurousness makes me hopeful for the year ahead.

As a lover of stories and characters as well as style, though, I didn't like anything I saw on the big screen this year in much as I did the first four seasons of *Breaking Bad*.

Most Stellar Performance

RK: Brenda Blethyn (*The Girl on the Train*), Michael Shannon (*Toke Shelter*), Meryl Streep (*The Iron Lady*), Elizabeth Olsen (*Maria Mary May Marlowe*), and Kristen Dunst (*Melancholia*) all did really impressive work, but it was *Brandsma's* Melissa McCarthy who

absolutely blew me away. That's just as incredibly unconvincing as acting. I need a second. And fast.

MH: This was a star-making year for Michael Fassbender and Jessica Chastain. His roles ranged from Mr. Rochester to Carl Jung to a sex addict, from from trailer-trash basketball to Israeli spy. And they landed in all those parts. But Andy Serkis (*The Hobbit*) got the prize for making the CGI clump of *King of the Hill* of the *Apes* into a revolutionary hero we can all root for. Occupy humanity!

Most Annoying Performance

RK: A number of seriously reliable actors turned in underwhelming performances this year. George Clooney was one of two (*The Ides of March* and *The Descendants*), as did Jake Foster (*The Rover* and *Compagny*). Tom Hanks was annoying as hell in the embarrassment that was *Larry Crowe*. But, let's face it, nobody was more annoying this year than Sarah Jessica Parker in *I Don't Know How She Does It*. I read on *Wiki* that they're forcing detainees at Guantanamo to watch that thing. I'm pretty sure even *Die* Clooney wouldn't have signed it — or that.

MH: Adam Sandler in *Just Go With It*. It's a talented guy, but as long as people keep paying to watch Sandler do half-assed, man-child things, I, uh, he will keep doing it. I managed to watch *Jack and Jill*, where he plays his own fat version of himself.

Best Comedy



RK: There were lots of good ones — *Cider With Ravens*, *Everything Must Go*, *Melancholia* in Paris, *50/50*, *Melancholia* and *The Guard* among them — but

nothing came close to *Brandsma's*. It's a laugh-off its own. Any word on that sequel?

MH: Tie between "Community" and "American Horror Story." Was, no. We're talking big screen only, so I vote *Brandsma's*, too.

Lamest Comedy

RK: As mentioned already, *The Rover*, *Larry Crowe*, and *I Don't Know How She Does It*. But *Ivory* was this lame. So were *Bad Teacher* and *Minions* or *Less*. One picture took liberties in a new level, however, if only because it spanned more than most: *It's a Wonderful Life*. The old-school romp that reminded us precisely why they don't make them like that anymore.

MH: My lamest comedy is also my pick for worst picture (see below). An honorable mention to *The Muppets Part II*, a slouch instead of the original that wasn't fresh enough to be funny.

Biggest Letdown



RK: This could easily prove the year's most crowded field. Disappointing, subtle work going in from every corner of the contemporary world. *Shame's* *Hating Core of Forgotten Dreams* was shockingly of his game. *Alexander Payne* (*The Descendants*) turned in a so-so film, serious years in the making follow up to *Sideways*. George Clooney missed the mark as director, co-writer and star in *The Ides of March*. So even when *don't know how she does it* has his name and talent on over-the-top, it's a 1/2 A. *Shameless* *Compagny*. *A Dangerous Method* swapped David Cronenberg's shock of women. And I can't imagine how *Steve Spielberg* was thinking where he made *War Horse*.

I'm still trying to figure out who the target audience is for this thing — 12-year-old girls who love horses and call it *World War I* movie? The biggest letdown for me, though, had to be *The Artist*. Talk about not living up to the hype. Black and white and silent for the most part, it's a cute experiment with a couple of clever touches, but the best bit of the year? Please.

MH: My biggest letdown was watching end movies such as *Toke Shelter* and *The Skin I Live In*. In support almost instantly from our theaters, which others, such as *Attack the Block*, never arrived. I don't blame theater owners for this. They need to see burns in the seats. The price we pay for the convenience of video on demand, it seems, is more uniform drab on our big screens.

Biggest Surprise



RK: Michael Fassbender's wit. The suddenly much in demand actor (also just *X-Men First Class*, *A Dangerous Method* and *Just Go With It*) came from very unexpected to the phrase "endorsement for the art" with his performance alongside Carey Mulligan in *Shame*, where director Steve McQueen's 80s 1/2-rated portrait of a sex addict. But the biggest surprise wasn't the screen-front nudity; it was that this film in context ever made it to the screen. A meaningful movie about meaningful sex. That would've made a pretty good film, actually.

MH: My biggest (happy) surprise were *Wage and Kango*, two B films occasionally for kids that were also genuine pleasures for adults. The former channels old movie love, and the latter will prepare your youngsters for Christmas.

Most Unnecessary Remake

RC: Do you ever wonder about the thinking behind these things? Old bad movies don't begin to be updated, and neither classics are unlikely to be equalled by new versions, so what's the point? All I know for certain is that choosing Sam Peckinpah's 1971 masterpiece *Straw Dogs* was about as dumb as studio decisions get. What's next...Justin Timberlake in a remake of *Chinatown*?

MC: *Fright Night* could have been a show on here, but the remake ended up better than the original. By contrast, *The Thing* was actually a prospect to John Carpenter's *The Thing*, but it felt as ineptitious and perfunctory as any remake I've seen.

DISAPPOINTING,
SUBPAR WORK
POURED IN FROM
EVERY CORNER OF
THE MOVIE-MAKING
WORLD.

—ERIC KISSEBAK

Least Superfluous Appropriation of a Comic Book, Video Game or Toy

RC: I'm going to cheat on this one because, frankly, I didn't see any superheros movies this year that would feel under the heading. Does it get more superheros than *Green Lantern* and *Conan* is *Alien*? I don't think so. My vote therefore goes to James Gunn's one-of-a-kind *Super*, in which Rakeem Watson plays a fry cook who switches careers and becomes a masked comic-fighter called the Crimson Bolt. Ellen Page is great in the role of this "kid sidekick" Debbie. *Super* only seems like it was based on a comic book. Gunn wrote the script. But it's a superhero story. One of the weirdest and most wonderfully original I've seen.

MC: Do the Muppets count as toys? Nah. This year no comic-book

adaptee, *Captain America: The First Avenger* had its moments, with the groovy 1940s setting contributing some charm. But I've about had it with the weekly parade of releases based on properties I don't care about.

Most Inexplicable Hit

RC: Spoiling of *Green Lantern* and *Conan* is *Alien*. At the box office, they came in at No. 21 and No. 26, respectively, among the hundreds of films released this year, and together took in well over \$200 million domestically. I'd call that inexplicable.

MC: How about *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* at No. 3? This franchise ran around two movies ago. If you were a fan of Johnny Depp doing the things he does, *Rango* is your film.

Most Inexplicable Flop

RC: What kind of world do we live in, I wonder, where *I Don't Know How She Does It* is the 12th most successful motion picture of the year, and *The Guard* — a piece of monumental genius — is the 138th? Have people lost their mind? Brendan Gleeson is universally acknowledged to be Ireland's finest living actor, and his Sgt. Gerry Boyle, a County Galway cop with a fondness for liquor, ladies of the evening and LSD, is one of the most brilliantly original movie creations in recent memory. It's beyond megalomaniac.

MC: Consider *Warrior* (No. 110), a film with all the elements of a huge crowd pleaser — macho dudes fighting in a cage, high-flying stunts, a la *The Fighter*, underdog themes, and did I mention those macho dudes are played by future stars (I hope) Tom Hardy and Joel Kinnaman? I couldn't care less about mixed martial arts, and I was what-losing-the-fight-for the fight. *War*'s here is combat on video.

Most Reprehensible New Movie Trend



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movies

Year in Film 2011

RK: A particularly egregious trend that's emerged over the past year is the art-house ossification of the no-ending ending. *Monk's Casey* pulled this stunt. As did *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, *Shame* and *Kinship*, to name a few offenders. I hope the folks on *Jeopardy!* short-listed. If a director's going to ask us to give our attention to a plotline's beginning and middle, it's only good manners to provide an ending.

THE PRICE WE PAY FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF VIDEO ON DEMAND, IT SEEMS, IS MORE UNIFORM DRECK ON OUR BIG SCREENS.

MARGOT HARRISON

MH: Returning to the multiples. This year brought us too many epic battles that looked like video games. There are creative ways to mix live action and digital effects, as we saw in *Hugo*, *End of the Planet* and *The Age of Adam* and a few scores in that otherwise awful Transformers mess. Post-convention 3-D is no excuse for turning your action into a fun, blurry bath that looks neither real nor cool.

Best Omen of Civilization's Impending Downfall

RK: The very scary fact that the science in *Contagion* is sound. I mean, if you believe the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, it asked *Scouts* for a gas mask after reading that.

MH: The millions of dollars Hollywood expended this year on crafting deeply digested masturbatory fantasies for boys (*Transformers: Dark of the Moon*), girls (*The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2*) and director Zack Snyder (*Sucker Punch*). At least the third one had a plot!

Best Movie With No Movie Stars

RK: I've got to go with *Attack the Block*, writer-director Joe Cornish's delightfully deranged sci-fi comedy starring about a South London teen gang defending their head against an alien invasion. No stars, no budget, just loads of fun.

MH: Agreed, but my pick is *The Runes*, the second film from ex-world-but-not-film-star Miranda July starring her, Hannah Lukkiter and a stuffed 30-year-old. It's every bit as indie and thoughtful and thought-provoking as *Michael Kohlhaas*. Really?

Worst Movie With an All-Star Cast



RK: Take your pick — *Yours Truly*, *Larry Crowne*, *Concussion* or *Alien*. I don't know how *Shrek* did. They each blew big-time, and I guarantee you every one of their bylines got paid more than a cent to make *Attack the Block*.

MH: Remember that trailer last winter where Vince Vaughn referred to his "colicist, cin or gay"? The controversial clip has more staying power than the comedy from which it came, *The Dilemma*, directed by Ron Howard and starring Vaughn, Willem Dafoe, Jennifer Connelly, Kevin James, Channing Tatum and Queen Latifah.

Best Documentary

RK: I'm honored that it's not making more newsmen's top-40 lists, but I maintain that *The Last Airborne* is one of the most important films of 2011. Bill Hays's shocking documentary indictment of Big Coal also ranks as one of the year's most inspiring. Freddy Krueger looks like Mr. Rogers next to some of the walking, talking monsters in this movie. Every bit as necessary as *Inside Job*. You owe it to yourself to make this No. 1 on your Netflix queue.

MH: I love documentaries about uncool, troubled people, and *The Asher* fits the bill. It's the story of a teen welfare man who became the saint of London literary society, but died young

and left her kids a dark legacy. The *Stansberry* merge makes interviews and reenactments for an experience that's literally unique in its genre.

Best Movie Vermont Probably Won't Get Until 2012



The One Lady

RK: *Andersson's I Can Dream*, can't it? More realistically, I say the postholiday season is likely to bring such gems as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *Albert Nobbs*, *The One Lady* and — the best of the bunch, for my money — *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, the super-crazy story of a woman whose worries about her son's psychological well-being are brushed off by everyone around her until the day he unleashes a one-man high school massacre. Todd Swinton is riveting.

MH: *Tucker & Dale vs. Evil* is a spy movie that actually stimulates your brain — just don't come cheaply or underestimating. That year hardware complete friends to *Kevin*, *Shame* and *A Dangerous Method* and enjoy the debate afterward. Do not act any of these three on a first date. Use a film that won't kill someone — or if you want to take your grandma — wait for *The Artist*. It's not groundbreaking cinema, just a sweet, feel-good film that will remind you to start watching TCM again.

Worst Picture

RK: OK, I think we've sufficiently named a handful of the year's lesser efforts. Being tricky is one thing; however, calling the most despicable is something else. It requires more than mere taste or discernment or a difference. This year, no film came as close as you didn't appreciate if you have even a modicum of good taste, and that was the *WHILE WE'RE HERE* *Smiley* *Key*. I'm sorry. You just don't get to play the Nazi card if all you're trying to do is jerk tears and tug heartstrings. With a few hours of TLC, there are my number of tried-and-true alternatives. In 2010, nobody stooped lower than director Gilles Pieper-Scherrer. Just what the world

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- author unknown

